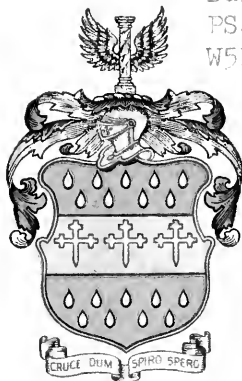




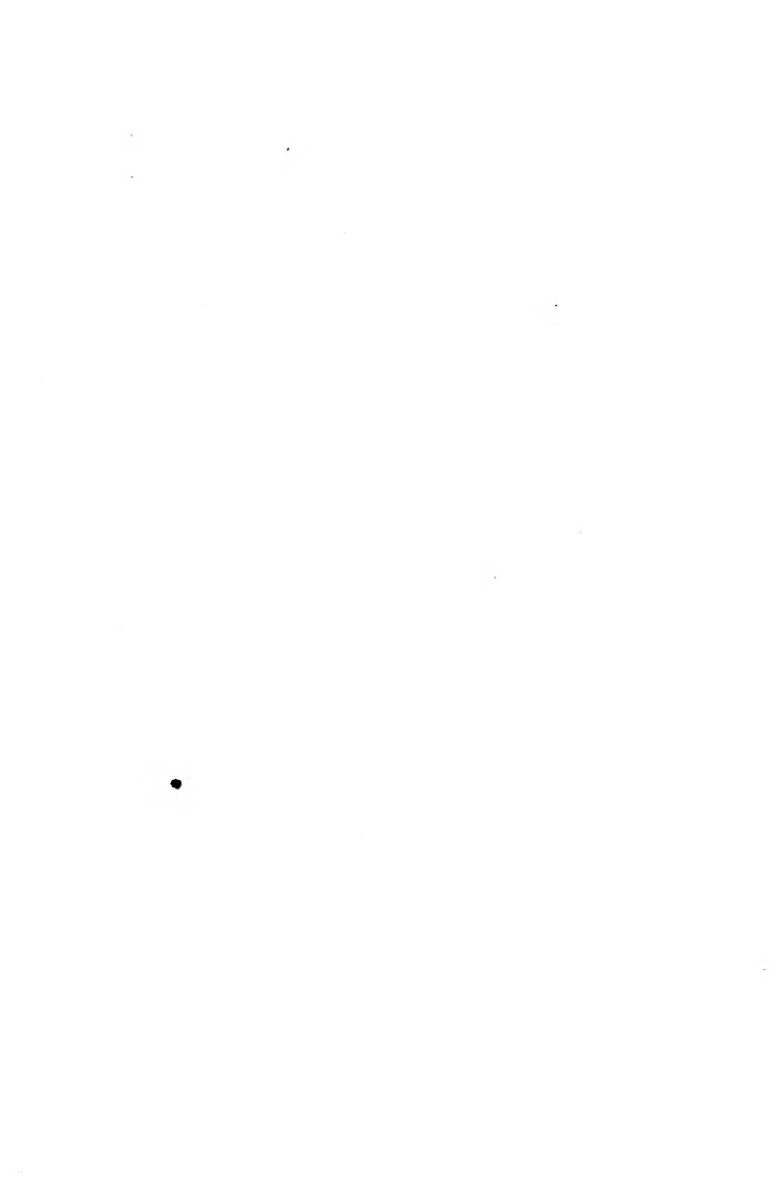
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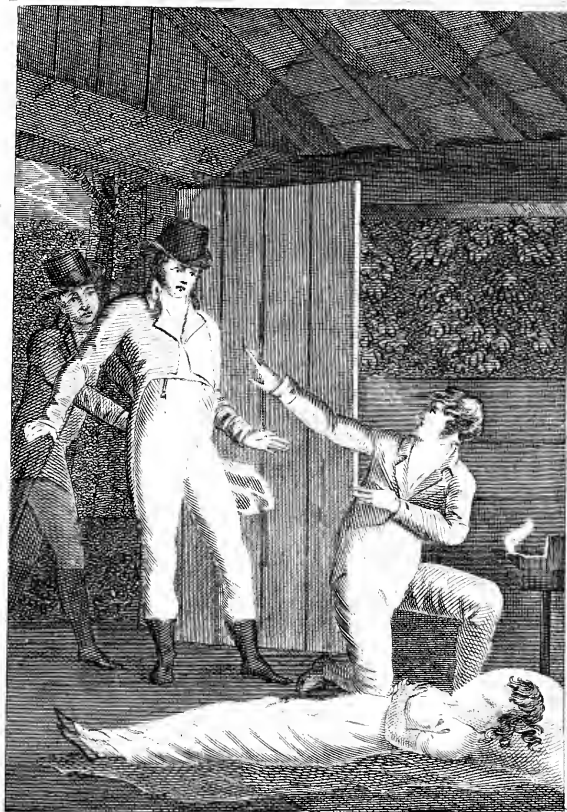


Darlington Memorial Library









Engraved

*'Away! approach not the victim of thy treachery; nor contaminate
by thy unhallowed presence, the sanctitude of this Asylum.'*

THE
LAWYER,

OR

Man as he ought not to be.

A TALE.

PITTSBURGH:

Printed for and published by Zadok Cramer, and sold at his
Bookstore (Franklin's Head) Market street.

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1808

1870

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DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO WIT:

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the eighth day
of August in the thirty-third year of the Independence of the United States of America, A. D. 1803,
* * * * *
* SEAL *
* * * * *
Zadok Cramer, of the said district, hath deposited in this office, the title of a book the right whereof he claims as proprietor, in the words following, to wit:

“The Lawyer, or Man as he ought not to be. A tale.”

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, intituled, “An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned:” And also to the act, entitled, “An act supplementary to an act, entitled, ‘An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned,’ and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving and etching historical and other prints.”

D. CALDWELL,
Clerk of the District of Pennsylvania

TO THE

HON. JOHN BUCHANAN, Esq.

CHIEF JUDGE OF THE FIFTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF
THE STATE OF MARYLAND.

SIR,

THE expectation that the following production, the offspring of occasional paroxysms of labour, and momentary intervals of solitude, will tend to beguile the *tedium* of an hour, is the only motive which induces the author to dedicate it to you. Knowing you, sir, to be a man whom the profession, which is too often attended with pernicious consequences to those who adopt it, but which you have practised, for a series of years, with honour and reputa-

tion, has not been able to coerce from the broad line of undeviating rectitude, he feels a gratification in having an opportunity thus to evince the respect he entertains for your character, and thus to point you out as an example worthy the most studious imitation. That the following TALE, then, may meet with your approbation is the most anxious desire of

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THE following sheets were written, chiefly with a view to exhibit the pernicious effects which result from a vitious education, and thus to show the propriety of early instilling into the youthful mind principles of justice, of truth, and of honesty. Nothing ought to be more studiously regarded, or more particularly attended to, than the conduct and morals of children; for on that depend, in an eminent degree, their future welfare, prosperity, and happiness. Man is an imitative being: In a state of infancy, when his faculties are yet plastic and unformed, he readily

adopts those motives of action, and pursues that mode of conduct he sees followed by those he deems his superiors. His mind is pliable, yielding, and susceptible; capable of receiving any impression, but inadequate to ascertain its solidity or correctness. To his parents he naturally directs his attention, and usually acts as they act, and thinks as they think. The care, therefore, which they, as his instructors, are bound by every duty, both religious and moral, to observe in rendering their conduct consistent with the principles of virtue, and thus exhibit to their infant offspring proper models of imitation, is sufficiently obvious.

Though some gentlemen of the law may feel disposed to censure the author for his observations on the general tendency of the legal profession; yet he presumes the more candid and intelligent part of

them will not hesitate to acknowledge, on a strict and impartial examination of the subject, the justness of his remarks. Conscious, however, of the purity of his motives, he feels a total indifference whether to them the following production shall afford pleasure or displeasure. Their opinion and their censure will be regarded by him, with little inquietude. It is from the liberal and the unprejudiced, he expects that candour and indulgence to which he conceives himself entitled, and from none but such.

That his work contains many defects he is well aware; but, for these defects he seeks not to apologize: such as it is, he gives it to the world, with all its faults, and all its imperfections, regardless whether it be received with pleasure, or rejected with disgust.

THE AUTHOR



THE LAWYER.

CHAPTER I.

MY name is Morcell. I was born in Maryland, of a family neither illustrious for its antiquity, nor conspicuous for its virtue. My mother lost her life in bringing me into the world; her death I have since frequently regretted, for had she lived I might perhaps have been enabled to avoid that horrible abyss of iniquity, into which, by the force of early education, I have been precipitated; and to pursue the even tenor of my way, through the varied scenes and vicissitudes of human life, unmoved and undisturbed by the fascinating temptations of sophisticated vice. My father pos-

sessed neither a masculine understanding nor an improved or cultivated intellect; his knowledge scarcely extended beyond the sweep of his vision, or the limits of his farm; and his mind, contracted by the sordid desire of accumulating wealth, was a desert heath, on which neither weeds nor flowers had power to vegetate. His heart, though not habitually good, was capable of being moved by those around him. Sincerely attached to my mother, he felt sensibly the magnitude of his loss; but time soon meliorated the poignancy of his grief, and I, being his only son, became his favourite. My sister, who was three years older than myself, had never been to him an object of affection; her infantine gambols had invariably excited his disapprobation, and frequently his disgust. From what source this paternal antipathy originated I am not competent to determine; but suffice it to say, it continued until the latest moment of his existence.

I very early began to evince a strong propensity for cunning and dissimulation; these vices I learned from my father, whose example I studiously imitated, and whose conduct I supposed to be regulated by reason, and governed by solidity of thought.

Children, before they are capable of discrimination, naturally look up to their parents as models of imitation; incapable of distinguishing between moral rectitude and depravity, or physical right and wrong, they implicitly adopt the conduct, the customs, and the habits of those under whose care they are placed, or to whose protection they are entrusted. It, therefore, becomes peculiarly the duty of parents, mindful of the future welfare and prosperity of their offspring, to exhibit to their tender perceptions, models of justice and of virtue, and constantly to excite their infant minds to the performance of noble and generous deeds.

I soon began to evince a disposition for wickedness; in robbing orchards, in demolishing hen-roosts, and in every species of juvenile mischief and depravity. I always led the way to my youthful associates, who, either fearing punishment or dreading censure, would but seldom accompany me to the scene of action. The fame of my exploits at length reached the ears of my father, who, being highly delighted with this early demonstration of superior sagacity and cunning, as he supposed it, resolved to make me a lawyer; justly concluding, that I should, at the bar, have an abundant opportunity of bringing into public view those powers, for which I was so early and so greatly distinguished. In pursuance of this resolution he employed a teacher who had once been a dumb barrister, and who was well acquainted with the *arcana* of legal villany, to instruct me in that technical subtlety, and ju-

ridical cunning, by which gentlemen of the long robe usually arrive at celebrity.

Under his tuition I improved rapidly. The precepts which he delivered, and the principles which he inculcated upon my youthful mind, tended to the annihilation of every thing moral and virtuous in man; but, as they left me to the free disposal of myself, and to the control and regulation of my own will only, they were perfectly congenial to my disposition, and as such I imbibed them with an avidity that sat every difficulty at defiance. He laboured incessantly to impress upon my mind the inutility of virtue, and the necessity of deception and hypocrisy, to a man destined as I was for the profession of the law. It was of no consequence, he said, whether the conduct of a lawyer were strictly consistent with the principles of integrity or not, for he would not, on that account, be more generally esteemed or more eminently conspicuous at the bar. The pos-

session of wealth, he taught me to regard as the *opus magnum* of human life, and to obtain it, every faculty, both of body and mind, should be exerted, and every practice resorted to, however mean or contemptible, that would, in the smallest degree, contribute to the accomplishment of that end. These precepts, he enforced by his example, and I, it will be supposed, profited by it.

Dorsey, which is the name of my *worthy* tutor, was wholly unacquainted with every species of scientific knowledge but law, with which, by laborious study and intense application in his younger years he was tolerably conversant. I was, therefore, suffered to vegetate in ignorance, and waste the most precious moments of my life under the guidance of torpid stupidity, to learn and recollect nothing but useless definitions and obsolete principles, and to pore, with incessant diligence, over the dull and tedious pages of Coke and Wood.

To me, however, this severe discipline was pleasing, as I was constantly excited to exertion by the brilliant prospect of certain and immediate wealth. Coke was soon as familiar to me as my alphabet, and I at last became enamoured of him to such a degree, as to prefer him before the most interesting and diverting narrative. But from this lethargy of thought, this insipid sameness of pursuit, I was at length roused by a circumstance which I will now hasten to relate.

CHAPTER II.

I AND my tutor were, at the regular return of morning and evening, in the habit of making little excursions, during the summer months, for the benefit of health and the purpose of recreation. In one of those jaunts, we casually met on the road a young woman, who was to us a total stranger. The elegance of her form, and the gracefulness of her motion, instantly excited my admiration. She was alone, and attired in the garb of a country girl. Apprehending no danger, I rudely seized her round the waist, and was about to convince my amazed tutor that his moral precepts had not been uselessly thrown away, when I was suddenly felled to the earth, by a blow which I received from an unknown hand. When I

recovered my senses, I perceived my faithful friend by my side, diligently occupied in sprinkling water over my face. He raised me with some difficulty on my feet, (for I had received a severe blow on the head), and assisted me to walk home, I swearing vengeance against the person who had thus ill treated me, and he vehemently cursing his stars, for being so unfortunate, for the stranger had grossly abused the dignity of the back and sides of my useful monitor.

The next day, after diligent search, I discovered the residence of the person from whom I had received the blow on the preceding evening, and found that he was brother to the young woman I had so ungenerously insulted, and so unmanfully abused. Their dwelling was but a small distance from the habitation of my father, which consequently rendered the means of gratifying revenge more easy and effectual. Having now attained an age, at

which the mind spurns at control, I resolved (the reader will forgive me, I mean “naught to extenuate”) to seduce the sister, and chastise the brother, if he again provoked my vengeance. With this intention, therefore, I repaired to their dwelling, and without difficulty gained admittance: Ansley was fortunately absent; to Matilda, which was the name of his sister, I made an elaborate apology, assigning intoxication as an excuse for the glaring impropriety of my conduct on the preceding day. I soon obtained her pardon, for the amiable sweetness of her disposition would not suffer her to harbour resentment for the interval of a moment. For one week I continued my visits regularly, and by practising every artifice I was master of, was so successful as to make a rapid progress in her affections.

As Ansley and his sister will be frequently mentioned in the course of this narrative, it

will be necessary to give the reader some account of them.

Edward and Matilda Ansley were the children of a Scotch gentleman of considerable respectability, who, quitting his native country in consequence of some failure in trade, came to America, with a view to carry on the mercantile business; but fortune was not more propitious in this, than in the country he had abandoned, for in a few years he was pronounced a bankrupt. This second calamity following so immediately after the first, damped his spirits, and ultimately brought him to his grave. With the wreck of his father's fortune, Ansley supported his mother and sister, for some time, with becoming decency; but having no means by which to increase his little stock, it soon became exhausted, which induced him to leave Baltimore, where he had hitherto resided. He took up his residence in the neighbourhood of my father; there he sat

up a school, and endeavoured by every exertion in his power, to animate the drooping spirits and preserve the existence of his poor mother, whose reverse of fortune preyed incessantly on her mind. His exertions were, unfortunately, not crowned with success; a rapid consumption soon carried her off the stage of life, and left him and his sister inconsolable for her loss. Ansley, however, always bore his misfortunes with the fortitude of a man, and rose in dignity at the approach of every new calamity. But Matilda would sometimes succumb to their accumulated pressure, and shrink, like the delicate sensitive plant, before the nipping blast of human misery.

Edward Ansley was a youth of singular excellence; his soul possessed an elevation scarcely human; from the loftiest pinnacle of virtue he never, for a moment, descended; nor from the line of eternal and immutable truth

did he ever, even in moments of jocularity, diverge. His conduct was governed by the strictest and most rigid principles of unsophisticated justice, morality, and universal good; and his heart, softened by adversity, would bleed at the contemplation of another's woe. His greatest ambition was to display the extent and perfection of virtue to which mankind are capable of arriving; his soul scorned to do an action that was not in its nature noble, or generous, or manly; in the meanest situation to which misfortune reduced him, he still adhered to the unalterable principles which he had imbibed, and by which he had ever been governed. He possessed a mind of the very first order, grave, sublime, energetic. His information was extensive, and his knowledge of the living world accurate and profound. He had drunk deep of the Pierian spring, and was rich in all the treasures of science. There was a degree of dignified su-

periority, which formed a kind of atmosphere around him, that excited awe and reverence in all who approached him, and it was impossible, after having once seen him, ever to forget him.

But Ansley was human; like the rest of mankind he had faults. Subject, by nature, to the influence of ungovernable passion, his education and philosophy were frequently unable to resist its violence. Bating this, Edward Ansley perhaps, approached nearer to human perfection, than any to whom nature had ever given existence.

Matilda, his sister, was in an eminent degree lovely, amiable and enlightened; her disposition was sweet, her manners polished, and her conversation instructive and fascinating; her remarks were just and pointed; her observations correct and accurate; every thing she did was done with ease, with grace, with elegance. There was a fascination in her every motion that rendered her irresistible, and a

heavenly sweetness in her manner, that almost instantaneously excited respect and love; her eye possessed that soft languishment that speaks the melting soul; her skin was perfectly transparent; her hair soft and undulating; the smile of innocence, blended with a touch of pensiveness, played upon her dimpled cheek, and gave a resistless *douceur* to her countenance. In fine, “there was in her all that we believe of heaven,

“Amazing brightness, purity and truth,

“Eternal joy and everlasting love.”

Yet this woman, I had the inhumanity, the cool and deliberate villany to destroy. With my senses clear, with my mind free from the dawning influence of illegitimate lust, I entered the mansion of peace like the midnight robber, for the nefarious purpose of bringing ruin, destruction, and death, on its unsuspecting inmate.

Oh! Matilda, dear departed shade, look
down with mercy on the sufferings, the pain,
the more than mortal agony I endure. But
why do I intreat; solicitation is vain; thou wilt
not, thou canst not hear me,

A min'st'ring angel will be thy soul in heaven,
When mine lies howling.

THE LAWYER.

CHAPTER III.

I CONTINUED my visits to Matilda every day, and every day received new demonstrations of regard and attachment; subdued by love, and the magnificence of my promises, she at last yielded to my embraces, and was ruined.

I confess that revenge was the only motive that led me to the commission of this act of deliberate guilt. I felt that I had been injured in the most tender point, by the stroke which I received from Ansley: I felt that I should sink in the estimation of my acquaintance, to whose ears it would be communicated by the babbling officiousness of my tutor, if I did not revenge it. I conceived the seduction

of his sister, to be the only effectual mode of accomplishing that end: indeed, I had not a sufficient degree of magnanimity to resort to more honourable means, or, perhaps, I should have adopted them. I had never been distinguished for the possession of personal courage; the idea of risking my life to maintain my honour, had never entered my imagination; life was to me every thing, character, comparatively speaking, nothing. Why then, I should resort to this infamous and dastardly mode of quieting the despicable passion by which I was actuated, is sufficiently obvious. Doubtless the reader, in the purity of his heart, will exclaim against such baseness: I seek not to avert it; I eminently merit it. Would to heaven it were the only instance of which I have been guilty!

It was not until some time after the seduction of Matilda, that I discontinued my visits, and ceased all intercourse with her. Repeatedly, during our illicit commerce, did she solicit me to fulfil the sacred promises I had made, by

marrying her, and thus, in time, prevent the infamy that would in consequence of this deviation from virtue, be attached to our characters; but nothing was more foreign to my mind. I felt no disposition to make her my wife. My end was fully and completely accomplished, and I exulted in the idea of having it, at last, in my power to wound the feelings of her brother.

Matilda, upon my desertion of her, became dejected, gloomy, and melancholy. She refused all sustenance and shunned the society of her acquaintance: to the most wild and unfrequented parts of the neighbourhood, she fled, when unobserved, to give vent to the feelings of horror and despair, by which she was tortured to agony. When the storm raged, the thunder rolled, and the lightning glared with the most terrific coruscations, Matilda would sally forth at the dead of night, and wander, exposed to all the violence of the storm, until the bright beams

of the sun began to illuminate the earth; when, with wearied steps, she would return to her abode of misery.

Ansley, at last, discovered the source of the inquietude and distraction of her mind. He was palsied with rage; with the rapidity of lightning he flew to my house and commanded me, instantly to marry his sister, or give him immediate satisfaction for the injury I had done her. Ill disposed to do either, I knew not what expedient I should fall upon to liberate myself from this perplexing dilemma. I endeavoured to calm his rage, but to no effect. He drew out a brace of pistols, which he had purposely brought with him, and presenting me one, ordered me, in a manly tone, to defend myself; terrified beyond measure, I fell upon my knees, and in the most suppliant manner, besought his mercy. I swore, by every thing that was held sacred among men, that I would immediately marry his sister.

At that moment my tutor entered the apartment. Unwilling to be seen in so humiliating a posture, I hastily arose, and animated by a gleam of courage, seized the pistol which he still held to my breast, commanded him to leave the room. Fired with indignation, he pulled the trigger, the pistol went off, and I fell. Dorsey called vociferously for assistance. My father, alarmed at the noise, entered, attended by several of his domestics, and seeing me covered with blood, was for a few moments deprived of the power of motion. The servants, however, being more collected, raised me from the floor and bore me to bed. One of them was instantly despatched in quest of a physician, who soon arrived and declared I was in no danger; for the ball had but slightly touched the blade of the right shoulder, without doing material injury. I was, however, necessitated to keep my room, in consequence of

the wound, for five weeks, during which I suffered the most excruciating corporal pain.

The day succeeding this event, I found, upon inquiry, that Ansley had made his escape, while the family were busied in administering to my relief, and accompanied by his sister, had gone no one knew whither. Thus ended this affair. I returned to my legal studies, with fresh alacrity and redoubled vigour.

The writing of wills, pleas and declarations, occupied the whole of my attention for several weeks, and my late melancholy adventure had almost escaped my recollection, when an event, totally unexpected, brought it again to my memory.

I was carelessly strolling one evening, on the banks of a small stream, at no great distance from my father's house, my attention wholly engrossed with the definition of bastardy, when I was accosted by a negro woman, who carried in her arms a white child of the most

prepossessing appearance; she begged me, for the love of God, to grant her a small sum to procure necessities for the infant's mother, who was then dying in her hut, for the want of food. I had never been remarkable for generosity, and therefore, paid but little attention to her entreaties. She still, however, continued to solicit me for relief. Offended at her importunity, I gave her a blow, by which she reeled and fell. At that instant I beheld Ansley; his eye seemed to dart fire, and his whole frame was convulsed with passion; he immediately made toward me, while I, amazed and confounded, stood riveted to the spot.

‘Villain,’ said he, seizing me by the throat, ‘inhuman, barbarous monster, is it thus you treat the petitioner of her you have so grossly injured! is it thus you spurn from you the innocent offspring of your guilt!’

I endeavoured to liberate myself from his grasp, but in vain; he held me more firmly,

and I was ready to faint with the apprehension of being immediately sacrificed to his just indignation; when, looking upon me with the utmost contempt, he cast me from him, and exclaimed, ‘Pitiful wretch, begone, you are too contemptible to merit my regard. I forgive you; but beware how you again destroy the happiness of a too credulous woman, by polluting the sacred shrine of virtue.’ I heard no more. I could not bear the fierceness of his look; I retreated, with the utmost precipitation, completely lessened in my own estimation.

I had always conceived and was ever taught to believe, that I was infinitely superior to all the young men in my neighbourhood. I was indeed, the only one acquainted with law. I could point out the distinction between a trespass on the case and a trespass *vi et armis*, as accurately as any county court lawyer in the state; but was wholly ignorant of the funda-

mental principles of justice, and the genuine effusions of philanthropy. It was, therefore, with astonishment, I beheld that superior dignity of mind, that grandeur of intellect, and that integrity of principle, which appeared so conspicuous in Ansley. I felt in his presence a species of dread that I could not account for, a sort of "*je ne sais quoi*," that made me tremble, when I approached him; and all my arrogance and presumption were ineffectual in calming the trepidation which his appearance invariably occasioned.

I had at first been somewhat surprised, when I discovered that the infant which the negro woman held in her arms, was the one to which I had given life. I felt however, no disposition to support it, or its mother. I indeed formed the wicked resolution, that they should both perish; but divine interposition prevented me from putting it in execution.

The reader will, perhaps, be shocked at this instance of human depravity ; he will say, it is not in the nature of man to be so wantonly, so deliberately wicked: would to heaven it were not so! then happiness, universal happiness, would be the result; man would be united to man, and integrity would be the bond of union. Suspicion, fraud, treachery, dissimulation, and every vice that tends to render man more contemptible, more despicable than brutes, would be banished society; and their place occupied by every virtue that contributes to ennoble and to exalt human nature. But alas! how visionary is this idea; it never can, it never will be realized as long as mankind are subject to the control and influence of passion, or continue to be governed and regulated by habit, precept, or example.

CHAPTER IV.

THE period at which I intended to make application for admittance at the bar, as an attorney, was now fast approaching, and I employed the intervening time, in cursorily perusing the legal authors, I had before read. One evening, as I was thus employed, my tutor rushed into the room, and in the utmost agitation, informed me, that my father had been considerably injured, by an old man, whose name was Edwards, who lived in a small cottage, which belonged to the former, and that he had also been attacked in endeavouring to assist him. Filial affection was the only virtue of which I could ever boast the possession; I therefore could not quietly suffer my father to be ill treat-

ed, with impunity. Without staying to inquire the cause of the affray, I immediately hastened to the house of Edwards, denouncing vengeance and extermination. I entered the cot. I found him kneeling by the bed side of his daughter, who was in the last stage of a consumption; his cheeks were bathed with tears, his eyes were turned towards heaven, and his arm extended in the act of adoring his God; unmoved by this spectacle of misery, that would have excited compassion in the breast of a savage, I seized the old man by the neck and dashed him to the ground, then grasping a cowhide which by chance lay on the floor, I began with the ferocity of a brute, to chastise this aged and venerable character. But I was not suffered to escape as safely as I imagined; my uplifted arm was arrested by Ansley; I instantly fell to the earth, and saw no more. When I recovered, I found myself in my own chamber, and my faithful tutor by my side.

He seemed to be much rejoiced at my recovery, and informed me that I had been conveyed home by two of my father's servants, to all appearances without life, and that Ansley had again made his escape.

This last piece of information I heard with much dissatisfaction, as I entertained the hope of bringing him to punishment. These repeated indignities, I was not of a disposition to bear with calmness, or suffer with impunity. Ansley had, I thought, abused, insulted and degraded me; my reputation as a youth of courage and generosity was irreparably injured; and I, before I had attained the age of manhood, was held in the utmost detestation and abhorrence. And of this, I unjustly supposed Ansley to be the principal cause, by circulating reports to the derogation and disparagement of my character. But suspicion is the property of a mind groveling and disingenuous; of a mind incapable of being enlarged by knowledge, or

expanded by philanthropy. It was therefore, natural for me to suspect him of being guilty of this baseness. But his nature was too noble, his soul too elevated, to descend to such infamy: I was too contemptible in his eyes, to be regarded with indignation. My pride, however, of which I possessed an inordinate share, and which always engenders quickness of resentment, had been wounded by Ansley; and on him, therefore, I swore to take exemplary vengeance, when chance should again cast him in my way and give me a superiority.

I now seldom left my apartment, but in company with my tutor, fearing lest I should again be attacked by Ansley, whose superior strength and courage I dreaded. I continued to pass my time, in this manner for several days, during which nothing material happened. I was, however, invited one evening to a wedding, which was to be celebrated in the neighbourhood in which I lived; I accepted the invitation, and

accompanied by my tutor, hastened to see the nuptials consummated. After continuing with the married pair until ten o'clock, I took my leave, and followed by my faithful Sancho, sought my way home. The night was uncommonly dark, the road along which we were to pass, lay through a wood whose awful gloom struck the mind with horror. We had not proceeded far on our journey, before reiterated peals of thunder, and incessant flashes of lightning, announced the approach of a storm. The rain began immediately to pour down in torrents, and to complete our misfortune, we lost our way. We wandered for a considerable time, without being able to know whither we were going; we endeavoured to make our way back, but became more entangled in the intricate mazes of the wood; at length completely exhausted with fatigue, we resolved to go no farther, and seating ourselves beneath a large oak, whose numerous boughs protected us, in

some measure, from the “ peltings of the pitiless storm,” patiently awaited the approach of day. We had not been seated there long, before the lightning fired the tree under which we sat, and compelled us to quit our shelter. As we were in search of another, we discovered a glimmering light at some distance from us; instantly we made towards it, and with much difficulty, reached the hut in which it was seen. I rapped repeatedly, but no person appeared; every thing within seemed as silent as the grave. I called, but received no answer. Wishing to procure a shelter for the night, I raised the latch, by which the door was fastened and entered. The first object that met my eye was Ansley, pale, dejected, and melancholy. He stood silently gazing on the placid visage of a corpse, which I soon recognised to be that of his sister. A tear stole down his manly cheek, and a deep drawn sigh proclaimed the extent of his sorrow. I cast my eye on the once lovely coun-

tenance of his sister. It was uncovered and the smile of innocence and beauty seemed yet to linger upon it. My heart sunk within me, and I felt for the first time, the throb of sorrow and compunction: alas! (cried I mentally) is that all that remains of my beauteous Matilda! why, why did I seek to ruin this unfortunate woman; accursed artifice, to blast the fairest bud that ever bloomed in the parterre of virtue; poor hapless girl, little did you think that death would have been the consequence of your credulity. Little did you imagine that the person to whom you confided your honour and your happiness, was a villain, determined to destroy them. Tears flowed involuntarily from my eyes, and I stood motionless with grief. Ansley had not yet observed my entrance. Sorrow absorbed his attention, and I was suffered to contemplate, without interruption, this sombre scene of human wretchedness. Every desire of revenge was at that moment banished from my breast, and I inwardly cursed myself

for being the unworthy cause of such calamity.

I was about to grasp, in my arms, the cold and lifeless form of my once affectionate Matilda, when the firm and manly voice of Ansley arrested my attention, and riveted me to the spot with admiration: ‘Oh! God, exclaimed he, in a tone modulated by his feelings, look down with compassion upon my sufferings; teach me to bear my misfortunes with calmness and resignation; and teach me also, I beseech thee, to pardon the inhuman murderer of my unfortunate deluded sister.’ ‘Heavens! (cried I, involuntarily with a degree of rapture I had never before felt,) what nobleness, what elevation of soul.’ My voice startled him from the reverie into which he had fallen at the conclusion of his prayer; and looking up, he discovered me standing by him: ‘Avaunt,’ (cried he, in a tone that almost froze my blood) ‘approach not the victim of thy treachery, nor

contaminate, by thy unhallowed presence, the sanctitude of this asylum;' then sunk again into his former inattention. I cast my eye around the room in quest of my tutor, and observed him gazing on the scene with horror; I desired him to follow me, and we both quitted the hut.

The storm had now ceased, the pale moon faintly beamed through the broken clouds which sometimes fled before it: the gloomy woods agitated by the breeze, sent forth a solemn sound, and added sublimity to the terrible scene. I felt a sensation of horror, of tremendous dread, I had never before experienced. I looked at the little cottage from which I had just issued; it was still, silent as death; not an insect disturbed the awful tranquillity that reigned within.

I turned from it, with feelings that surpass the power of description, and endeavoured to

regain the road from which I had strayed. By the faint light of the moon, that occasionally displayed her watery visage, I was soon enabled to discover it, and accompanied by Dorsey, who had all along preserved a rigid silence, reached my dwelling in safety.

CHAPTER V.

I IMMEDIATELY hastened to my chamber, and threw myself upon the bed. I endeavoured to sleep, but in vain; the scene which I had just witnessed, tortured my imagination, and drove sleep from my pillow. Worn out with fatigue, I at last sunk into a gentle slumber, from which I was soon roused by a dream that filled me with horror.

I thought I was sitting on the bank of a beautiful stream, perusing a favourite legal author, when I saw one of the most lovely forms I had ever beheld, advancing slowly towards me: her loose auburn tresses flowed in natural ringlets over exquisitely modelled shoulders;

her cheek was suffused with tears, and a soft shade of melancholy, which proved her conversant with sorrow, hung over her countenance, and gave an additional charm to her delicately polished features. She bore in her arms a lovely infant, on whose cheek she sometimes imprinted the kiss of maternal affection. It was my Matilda. She approached, and presented the infant to me: ‘Take,’ said she, ‘the offspring of thy lawless lust; cherish it in thy bosom; let it never feel the chill blasts of penury, and while its infant reason expands, tell it the fate of its mother, and the guilt and cruelty of its father.’ As I reached forth my arms to receive it, I thought I beheld her brother.

His face was covered with blood, and he brandished a poniard in the air. Instantly he made towards his sister, and seizing her by the arm, plunged the dagger into her breast; she groaning fell, and expired. He drew forth the weapon, reeking with her gore, then turning to

me, 'Cold blooded villain!' he exclaimed, 'prepare to meet thy merited doom!' He raised his arm, and was about to strike the fatal blow, when I awoke in the utmost terror; still strongly under the power of imagination, I conceived this dream to be real, and suddenly starting up, beheld, to my amazement, a figure clad in white, standing by my bed.

I had been early taught to believe that the spirits of the dead were permitted to revisit the earth, for the purpose of tormenting those by whom they had, in life, been injured. This notion which was infused into my infant mind, by the miraculous tales of babbling gossips, has never been completely eradicated. If I had received a proper and judicious education, I should no doubt, have seen the folly and ridiculousness of this opinion; but instructed as I was, only, in the despicable sophistry of vice, and educated in the destructive and pernicious maxims of folly and ignorance, it was natural

for me to credit the possibility of such an event.

Thinking, therefore, that what I saw, was the apparition of my deceased Matilda, I shrunk with horror, beneath the covering of my bed, and lay, violently perspiring, for several moments, without daring to move. Hearing no noise, I ventured to pull the clothes gently off my head, and my eyes again met the same terrific object. I could bear the sight no longer, and uttering an involuntary shriek, fell overpowered with terror into a fit. In this situation I continued until morning, when I recovered, and perceived that the sun had risen, and the family were in motion. I immediately arose, and left my room. I inquired of the servants if they had observed any person enter the house during the night, but was answered in the negative. Supposing now, that my imagination had deceived me, I forbore to mention the cir-

cumstance to my father and tutor, and commenced my daily study with usual alacrity.

I knew that Matilda would be interred that day, but as I had experienced sorrow enough on the preceding night, I felt no disposition to attend her remains to the grave, and passed the afternoon in mirth and festivity.

If I had been blessed with acuteness of sensibility, and poignancy of feeling, Matilda's death would doubtless have made an indelible impression upon my mind, and driven happiness perhaps for ever from my bosom; but dead as I was to the finer passions and more delicate emotions of the human heart, I consequently soon ceased to regret her death, and the affliction of her noble brother.

But every thing moral is the creature of habit and education. If I had not been accustomed from my earliest infancy, to look upon human misery with the coolest indifference, I should long have felt the throb of sorrow and

compunction for the misfortunes which I had wantonly brought upon the hapless Matilda; nothing therefore, can be more evident, than that the general tenor of human action is fashioned according to the impressions which are made upon the mind subsequent to birth, and that all men would be rigidly virtuous, were virtue properly delineated, and constantly exhibited to their perceptions, from the period at which reason begins to dawn. If we trace the cause of hypocrisy, dissimulation, and all those vices which tend to the degradation of man, we will find that it originates from the pernicious and destructive maxims, inculcated by a vitious education, which being often repeated, make an impression upon his memory not easily eradicated. Circumstances which transpired at an early age, we can recollect until the latest moment of existence; while those that happen at a more advanced period, frequently pass away and are forgotten. It is

therefore certain, that those impressions, whether of a virtuous or vicious tendency, which are made upon the mind in early youth, become not unfrequently, lasting and indelible; so that if we are taught, in our infancy, to regard a particular deed with horror, or with admiration, those feelings when excited, continue to move while the fountain of life continues to flow. But to return:

The time having now arrived, at which I wished to be admitted at the bar, I repaired with that view to M.....h, where I intended to commence the practice. I made application, and was admitted without opposition. I began my career of legal greatness with very unfavourable prospects of success; for having never made eloquence my study, I could not express myself with that ease and propriety, which are the distinguishing characteristics of an orator, and without which, no lawyer will ever arrive at eminence in his profession; and, as the ma-

jority of litigants always flock to those who possess the greatest fluency of language, and facility of enunciation, (in both of which I was exceedingly deficient) my views of future aggrandizement were necessarily very gloomy. Although I possessed as great a share of impudence as any lawyer at this bar, yet I could not address the jury on any but the most simple and plain questions of law. This deficiency I soon discovered originated, in a great degree, from my shameful ignorance of general literature. I therefore, resolved to obviate this inconvenience, by devoting all my leisure moments to the acquisition of useful knowledge; and accordingly appropriated a certain portion of time in each day to the study of science and of polite literature, in which, it will be readily supposed, I did not make a very rapid progress. Law was, however, still my favourite study, and to it I always had recourse as a source of amusement. Such is the effect of early habit.

I continued to pass my time in this manner for several months, with little intermission; for having barely a sufficient run of legal business, to enable me to support existence with decency, I had time enough to devote to literary acquirements, in the pursuit of which I was indefatigable and persevering. That vanity, which had ever been my principal characteristic, soon taught me to believe I was superior to most men, in extent of knowledge and fecundity of genius. I did not recollect that "a little learning is a dangerous thing," and foolishly imagined I could overpower a Cicero in argument, were he to oppose me.

I now anxiously wished to see Ansley, (for he was the only youth whose elevated genius I dreaded) to exhibit before him the amplitude of my acquisitions and to make him the butt of ridicule. But men are always willing to deceive themselves, and I was perhaps the completest dupe of self-deception that ever

breathed. An argument, which the high opinion I entertained of myself, induced me to enter into with a young barrister, infinitely inferior to Ansley, at last convinced me of the littleness of my knowledge and the poverty of my intellect. I however, still continued to prosecute my studies, supposing that the acquisition of learning would contribute to the more speedy acquisition of wealth, the great object of my pursuit.

CHAPTER VI.

THE practice of the law it is said, tends to brutalize the feelings, to subvert the judgment, and to annihilate every virtuous principle of the human heart. I had not been long at the bar before I discovered the truth of this declaration; indeed it cannot possibly have any other tendency. A lawyer, from the first moment he enters into business, becomes habituated to scenes of injustice and oppression; from which, if he possess the smallest particle of sensibility, he turns at first with disgust and abhorrence; but custom soon renders them familiar, and in process of time, he can view them with the utmost coolness and indiffer-

ence. This lamentable consequence is the frequent result of the practice of the law. For, it is evident, that a perpetual fellowship with dishonesty, and a constant intercourse with villany, will in time, destroy every tender emotion and sap by degrees the foundation of the most rigid virtue.

A youth, for example, distinguished for vigour of understanding, integrity of principle, and generosity of sentiment; but unfortunately oppressed with poverty, commences the practice of the law. Necessity, we will suppose, at first urges him to undertake a cause, evidently repugnant to truth, to justice, and to humanity. He finds himself compelled to use the grossest and most despicable sophistry, to gain the cause of his client; he succeeds. He has perhaps, rescued a hardened and desperate villain from the grasp of death, or entailed unavoidable misery on an innocent fellow creature. He sees the impropriety of his conduct

with regret, but knows that it is now irremediable. Necessity again stimulates him to appear in a similar case, which is attended with similar consequence: he sees the same practice daily adopted by others of his profession, and begins to look upon it with more indifference. Thus he proceeds, by imperceptible gradations, until he loses that energy of intellect, that magnanimity of sentiment, and that generosity of intention, for which he was once distinguished.

In me, however, the practice of the law made no material alteration; for, as my tutor had early instilled into my mind the most pernicious and dishonourable principles, by which he rendered me fit for every species of villany, it necessarily could not make me the smallest degree more iniquitous than I was already. I advocated the cause of the oppressor against the oppressed, with as much warmth and vehemence as I would have done that of my father

or my most intimate relation; the distress and even the ruin of an individual, which I regarded with perfect indifference, had not power to prevent me from persevering in this infamous practice. I reasoned thus: if my client, though evidently culpable, apply to another, he will undertake his cause; why then should I not do the same? am I more to blame for doing that which is lawful than another; certainly not! then why be influenced by so paltry a consideration as the uncertain misery of a fellow creature?

Thus I deluded myself, by the grossest sophistry, and gilded over the most nefarious action, by the persuasion that it was nothing more than was constantly done by others.

The love of wealth, I have before said, was in my breast, as in that of almost every legal practitioner, the ruling passion. To that I willingly sacrificed the few virtues I possessed, and became, in the opinion of the public, the

greatest scoundrel at the bar. Men, however vicious themselves, always detest vice in others; I was, consequently, regarded with detestation, and gradually lost my business.

Thus disappointed in my expectation of accumulating wealth, I had recourse to the gaming table, as the most expeditious method of obtaining that for which I so anxiously longed. My success, at first, was extremely flattering. By taking every advantage my superior knowledge of gaming enabled me to use, I was, in a few weeks, worth three thousand dollars. Thus, in the possession of a sum so much above my expectation, I determined to abandon the profession of the law, and revolve in a loftier sphere; but the blast of misfortune dashed the aerial fabric, in which I had placed my happiness, to the ground, and left me to contemplate its ruins in horrid despair.

Having gone, one evening, according to my usual custom, to my old haunt of vice and dissipation, with a view to add if possible another mite to my hoard, by those means which I had previously found so successful, unfortunately I engaged with a knowing one, who in a few hours, deprived me of all I had formerly won. I left the room in a state of mind that transcends the power of description. I was perfectly frantic. I stamped furiously on the earth, tore my hair, and imprecated curses on the man who had robbed me. I rushed home, uttering the most incoherent expressions. I threw myself upon my bed, and in the violent efflux of passion, determined to put a period to my existence.

I, who had a few hours ago, been perhaps the richest man in M.....h, was now the poorest, and most indigent person in it. The thought was maddening; I could not bear it; death, I conceived, infinitely preferable to a life of poverty and consequent wretchedness;

for the idea of accumulating wealth by my profession had now completely abandoned me. I therefore meditated, and accordingly waited until the family, with whom I lived, should retire to rest, that I might the more effectually terminate my career of infamy. Such is the effect, reverse of fortune has upon feeble minds. If I had reflected, that the sum which I had lost, had been obtained by the most despicable means, I should perhaps have borne my loss with more firmness and magnanimity. But this reflection never entered my imagination. I thought of nothing but the folly of which I had been guilty, in again risking my money at the gaming table, in foolishly casting away that wealth which, I supposed, would have made me completely happy.

I continued to indulge these torturing recriminations until the clock struck twelve. I started from my bed, and listening a few moments, found the family had retired and every

thing in the house perfectly still. I took down one of my pistols; it was loaded. 'Now,' cried I, 'ere to-morrow's dawn, I shall be a breathless corpse, a cold inanimate lump of clay, and why? that I may not suffer poverty, and its attendant train of miseries.' This reason was, to me, perfectly irresistible. As I raised the pistol to my head, I casually cast my eye upon the table. A book, which I had been reading the day before, lay open upon it, and these lines,

"When all the blandishments of life are gone,

"The coward sneaks to death, the brave lives on,"

struck me, with a force almost electrical. What! thought I, shall I, like a miserable coward rashly put a period to my life, to avoid misfortunes which by due exertion may never happen? Shall I foolishly rush into the presence of an offended God, merely because I have lost that which I unlawfully gained?

The rays of truth darted instantaneously across my mind. I saw the dreadful precipice on which I stood, and shrunk back with horror. The pistol fell from my hand, and I remained for a few moments, a ghastly spectacle of dismay.

How strange is the human mind! how rapid are its changes! In a paroxysm of frenzy, I had meditated self-destruction. It was the only idea that, for several hours, occupied my distracted imagination. I conceived it to be the most effectual mode of flying from the torture of self-condemnation, and of obtaining the happiness of oblivion. The most trivial incident had instantly altered the train of my ideas, and brought me to a recollection of what I was doing. The idea of a future state had, for the first time since my infancy, entered my mind, and struck me with inconceivable dread and consternation. To this had succeeded a sense of the iniquity of the deed I was about to per-

petrate, and a detestation of my conduct. At one moment I determined to commit suicide, and at the next, regarded it with horror. Such are the vicissitudes of the mind.

As I was about to cast myself on my bed, I was alarmed by the cry of fire, reiterated from every part of the town. Immediately I rushed out of the house, and beheld the prison in flames. I directly made towards the spot; all the inhabitants were assembled in front, where the fire raged with most fury, endeavouring to extinguish it. I passed on to the back part of the gaol, with a view to contemplate the scene without interruption, (for I felt no disposition to assist in its extinguishment) and placed myself at some distance from the building. I had not been there long, before part of the roof fell in with a terrible crash, and exhibited to my view a man chained to the floor, and vehemently imploring assistance; but as there was no person on this side of the house but myself,

he implored in vain. Just as the flames, which had been rapidly approaching, seized his body, a man, muffled up in a large coat, hastily passed me, and rushed to the relief of the unfortunate prisoner; but he was alas! too late; the relentless element had evaporated the fountain of vitality, and, in a few moments, consumed him to ashes; the stranger returned, and as he again passed, he eyed me with great attention, and muttered something which I could not distinctly hear. I now returned leisurely to my lodgings, meditating on the unhappy fate of the poor prisoner who had just perished in my sight, and wondering at the strange events which had transpired within the last twenty-four hours.

I entered my chamber which was in the second story. It was about one o'clock: I opened the window in order to inhale the passing breeze. The scene was striking. The moon shone with the most magnificent brilliancy; a

number of lombardy poplars, planted near the house, waved to and fro by the cool refreshing gale, and sent forth a solemn and melancholy sound; while, at a small distance below, flowed a murmuring stream, on whose dimpled surface the moon-beams sweetly played; here “was room for meditation;” my thoughts involuntarily recurred to the transactions of the evening. The recollection of some was painful in the extreme. I shuddered with horror, when the thought of the rash deed I had desired to perpetrate struck my mind. To murder myself! what madness! sure frenzy had usurped the dominion of reason. I looked back upon my temerity with astonishment, and shuddered to think I had been so near the precipice of eternity.

Suicide cannot be sufficiently reprobated. Man was created to be useful. Every act of his should contribute to that end. If even misery be the concomitant of existence, that mi-

sery should be endured for the sake of general utility. By quitting life we cease to be useful, and are necessarily rendered incompetent to accomplish the great purpose for which we enjoy being. But why terminate our existence? Is it to put a final close to all our cares and all our calamities? Is it to obtain a future scene of endless felicity? or is it to abandon, through mere disgust, a world in which we have perhaps experienced a greater portion of pain than of pleasure? If it be so, the idea is chimerical. Can the mere privation of life effectuate that purpose? Have we any conception of futurity? Do we know what will happen in a state of which we have no definite comprehension? It may or may not be a state of endless happiness or endless misery. To us it is dark and mysterious. We know not certainly what the great regulator of the universe may, in the plenitude of his wisdom and mercy, deem it expedient to do with us hereafter. Then why

exchange a certainty for an uncertainty? why foolishly launch into a condition involved in inexplicable doubt, merely to obtain a remission of transitory suffering? But suppose it to be certain; grant that there is a state in which the good are rewarded, and the bad punished; are we not told that the murderer will hereafter receive that punishment which he merits? Why then wantonly plunge into eternal misery.

Let us consider it in another point of view. The self destroyer deprives himself of life either to avoid pain or fly from disgust. He who cannot bear the ills incident to humanity, with fortitude and dignity, is a mere nullity in creation; but pain is not perpetual; our pleasures are perhaps as numerous as our pains. If then we were to commit suicide, whenever assailed by misfortune, or agonized by the torments of reflection, the human race would soon become extinct. But to return:

As I contemplated the scene before me, I must confess with but little satisfaction, for the beauties of nature had never afforded me much gratification, I thought I heard the sound of a human voice, and casting my eye in the direction from which it seemed to proceed, beheld the same person I had seen at the fire, standing under a poplar which overhung my window. The strangeness of his conduct now occurred to my memory, and listening, with a degree of attention that almost suspended the power of breathing, heard him exclaim, in a distinct and audible tone, ‘By heaven, to-morrow night he dies.’ Considerably alarmed, I drew in my head, the window closed and he retired.

This strange declaration began, upon reflection, powerfully to excite my fears. The attention with which he had previously viewed me, the inarticulate expressions which he had then uttered, and his standing at that late

hour so near my window, all seemed to portend the utmost danger. I had no doubt but I was the person to whom he alluded; yet who he was that acted thus mysteriously, I could not conjecture. I took a rapid retrospect of my life, and vainly endeavoured to fix upon a person base enough to perpetrate so desperate a deed. Ansley was the only individual I had to my knowledge palpably injured; but he, I had reason to believe, would spurn with indignation at such an action. All my conjectures, therefore, terminated in perplexing uncertainty, and I retired to bed, completely at a loss to unravel the enigma.

CHAPTER VII.

THE fear and agitation which the mysterious conduct of the stranger had occasioned, prevented me from sleeping much during the remainder of the night. I therefore arose early, and having taken breakfast, made every effort in my power to discover the assassin who had threatened my life, but was not successful. In order, however, to render his design abortive, I determined upon lodging that night with a friend of mine, who lived at a small distance from town. In adherence to this determination, I repaired in the evening to his dwelling. I informed him of the motive of my journey, and related the strange conduct of the person whom I thus wished to avoid. He said it was

quite mysterious, perfectly enigmatical to him, and advised me to continue at his house that week, ere the expiration of which, the person, he thought, who had thus manifested a desire to assassinate me, would in all probability abandon his design, after discovering that I had left town. This I conceived to be a judicious plan, and therefore adopted it, but passed the greatest part of the week in a very gloomy and unsatisfactory manner. My reflections on my loss at the gaming table, the bad success with which my efforts at the bar had been attended, and the deplorable condition in which I was placed from the constant dread of assassination, preyed upon my mind, and drove peace and tranquillity from my bosom. My friend did every thing in his power to remove this gloom, reanimate my hopes, and point out more brilliant prospects of success.

“ Morcell,” said he, one day to me, “ this despondency is unworthy the dignity of man.

It evinces a weakness of mind, an imbecility of intellect that would disgrace a child. The man that cannot bear with fortitude and resignation, all the calamities, all the vicissitudes to which human nature is subject, scarcely deserves to live. He is a pest that destroys the comforts and pleasures of society: a monster that embitters all the moments of those with whom he is united by the bonds of friendship or of consanguinity. Rouse then from this shameful torpidity, and lay aside this childish grief for what may easily be remedied."

I thanked him for his friendly exhortation, and endeavoured to profit by it; my efforts were, in a few days, crowned with success, and I again became gay and jocund. I had never possessed a gloomy or melancholy disposition, and therefore did not long indulge those sombre reflections which my critical situation had occasioned. My friend observed this

change with evident satisfaction, and the more effectually to dissipate my attention, would walk out with me, every evening, to view his plantation.

In one of those vespertine excursions, we met with an adventure of a very ridiculous nature. Having extended our walk beyond its usual limits, we were leisurely returning by a road which led immediately through a field that belonged to a neighbour of my friend, when our attention was arrested by reiterated groans which seemed to issue from a Negro hut at a small distance from us. Led by curiosity, I walked to the door and looked in; but what was my astonishment, when I beheld Dorsey, my old tutor, standing in the midst of a congregation of blacks, who were groaning in the spirit, and denouncing the exterminating vengeance of heaven, against those who would not turn from the broad road of perdition. I drew back, that he might not observe me, and

listened attentively to his eloquent harangue. ‘O! sinners,’ cried he, ‘poor, helpless, undone sinners, if you do not quit your evil doings, if you do not immediately become soldiers of Christ, the mighty arm of the Lord will precipitate you headlong into the lowest abyss of hell.’ As he said this, he gave a violent stamp on the floor, and oh! strange to be told, my eloquent tutor, at that tremendous moment, sunk from my view, and plunged into a region, infinitely more dark, dismal, and frigid, than that to which he was consigning his groaning hearers.

He had been standing on a trap door which happening to be loose, gave way by the violence of the blow, and let him into the cellar, which was unfortunately filled with water. Finding himself in so very unpleasant a situation, he began to roar vociferously for assistance; but his congregation were too much astonished to move. My friend and I, after

witnessing his distress for a few moments, with infinite satisfaction, at length drew him, with some difficulty, out of his watery dungeon. He appeared to be greatly confused when he recognised me, and hung his head in sheepish stupidity. I endeavoured, though awkwardly, (for I could scarcely refrain from laughter) to banish his confusion, which had for the first time in his life completely overwhelmed him, and was at last successful. My friend requested him to accompany us to his house, where he might procure a change of clothes: Dorsey, never of a disposition to refuse a generous offer, very readily complied with his request, and we walked home very contentedly together.

I afterwards learnt, that my quondam tutor, having by some means incurred the displeasure of my father, shortly after my departure to M.....h, had been obliged to leave his house, and adopt the profession of an exhorter,

in order to support his existence; that he had travelled at random about the country, preaching in every hut into which he could gain admittance; and that by the affected gravity of his visage, and the hypocritical sanctity of his manners, he had so far imposed upon the credulity of the illiterate vulgar, as to enable him for some time, to live in a very reputable manner.

On the following day, (my fears being now nearly removed,) I took leave of my friend, and accompanied by Dorsey, whom I took again into my service, set out for M.....h, which we reached in safety.

I was once more compelled to have recourse to my old profession, which, in the elation of ideal grandeur, I had foolishly abandoned; and continued to practise the law, though under the frequent apprehension of again meeting my mysterious visitant, until a circumstance happened which compelled me to leave M...h

It was this: Shortly after my admittance at the bar, I was employed by a widow, who was burdened with six small children, to institute an action against a man who had attempted to violate her chastity. The suit was accordingly commenced, and she was cast, though principally by my inattention. I, at first, neglected to demand the payment of my fee; but, upon my return to town, being under some pecuniary embarrassments, I solicited her for it. She earnestly entreated me to grant her a few months longer, in which to pay it, affirming that, at that period, she was absolutely destitute of money to procure the common necessities of life for her children. I was, however, inexorable, and illegally commanded the constable to arrest her. Unwilling to lie in prison, she promised to dispose of her bed, the only moveable chattel of any value in her miserable hut, to satisfy my demand, and requested him to appoint a day on which to sell it. I had the

inhumanity to accompany the constable, on the day of sale, to the wretched hovel in which she lived, and to stand calmly by, and behold him drag the bed from beneath her, (for she was then actually ill) and expose it to sale. It had not been long bid for, before I discovered Ansley rushing from among the gaping crowd, and with the dignified complacency of disinterested generosity call the constable aside, and instantly pay him. I sneaked home completely disgusted with my own insignificance.

Upon my arrival at my lodgings, I began to reflect on the philanthropic conduct of this amiable young man. His daring intrepidity, and unparalleled generosity struck me with admiration, and excited in my bosom a faint emulation to rival him in those qualities for which he was distinguished. ‘Virtue!’ cried I, ‘pure and unsophisticated virtue! whether found in the magnificent palace of the prince, or in the lowly cottage of the peasant, thou

wilt ever command the esteem and reverence of mankind; and however unsuccessful thou mayest be for a time, wilt ultimately be crowned with rewards, more lasting, more durable, and more imperishable than the vaunted system of created nature.' I was here interrupted by the sudden entrance of Dorsey, who came to inform me that the inhabitants of M.....h, being highly irritated at my barbarous treatment of the unfortunate widow, were making rapidly towards my office, in order to demolish it, and tar and feather me if I did not instantly leave the town.

This intelligence operated upon me like the touch of the torpedo, and benumbed almost every fibre in my body. I stood for a few moments, riveted to the floor, ignorant in what manner to proceed. Soon however, recovering my presence of mind, I passed through the back door, and taking a circuitous route left town without being observed. I continued to walk

forward, with a rapidity that clearly indicated the perturbation of my mind, until the sable curtain of night had veiled the face of nature. I now left the public road, and took through a field in expectation of finding a farmer's house, at which I might lodge that night. I fortunately soon reached one, and was readily admitted by its hospitable inmate. The night being far advanced, I requested permission to retire to rest, and was immediately conducted to a chamber in which I reposed until morning, with as much tranquillity as the agitation of my mind would suffer me to enjoy.

CHAPTER VIII.

MY situation was now truly lamentable. Universally detested by those with whom I was acquainted, ignominiously forced to forsake the town in which I hoped to spend the remaining part of my days, and almost an out-cast from society, in the very dawn of life, were circumstances that contributed to depress my spirits, to damp the ardour of my pursuit after wealth, and to render my condition completely miserable.

I did not imagine that these misfortunes had been created by the narrowness of my mind, the pusillanimity of my soul, and the malevolence of my disposition. I conceived

that I had acted in most instances, with the integrity that became a man. Indeed, I had no conception of any virtue beyond what I thought I possessed. Ansley had, to be sure, acted with more generosity than I had ever felt disposed to exhibit; but I now pleased myself in believing he had been influenced by interested motives. Such will ever be his conception, whose understanding is buried in the glooms of ignorance, or has been perverted by the pernicious maxims of folly; and such will ever be his opinions, whose comprehension is inadequate to grasp the noble, the daring, the disinterested actions of those distinguished for purity of intention, generosity of sentiment, and grandeur of soul.

Supposing it useless to return to M.....h, as I had no expectation of succeeding at that bar, I resolved to try my fortune at Baltimore, and accordingly wrote to Dorsey, requesting him to send my books thither.

After breakfast I took leave of my good host, without thanking him for his hospitality, and travelled on foot to Annapolis, which I reached late in the evening. I immediately hastened to a tavern in town, and after ordering supper, entered a chamber in which a gentleman was sitting, who seemed to be occupied in reading a newspaper. I sat down and began to ruminate on my fallen condition. How sanguine, thought I, are the expectations of youth; I, who at my first entrance into the busy world, flattered myself with the delusive hope of becoming instantly rich and independent, am now a poor, needy and solitary wanderer; without a friend to relieve my wants, or knowledge to regulate my conduct; my character branded with infamy, my hopes almost annihilated, and my prospects of future greatness darkened by the sombre clouds of misfortune.

My attention was diverted from these reflections by the sudden entrance of a youth,

magnificently equipped and deliciously perfumed. After politely saluting my companion, he seated himself near him; "Well, Dick," cried he, "I have just returned from an expedition, that will reflect eternal honour on my name." "Military or amorous?" inquired the other, laying down the paper which he had been reading. "Amorous, by the immortal gods," exclaimed the youth. "I never attack men, when the fort of beauty is to be besieged. But dash me, Dick, if I did not tip the old codger agog, dazzle the peeper of a fair one, and make off with her virginity at a tangent." "Admirable upon my soul," replied the other, "but your capacity that way is not to be doubted. Pray tell me how you performed this wonderful achievement." "In my usual way," answered the stripling; "I was dashing furiously through little M.....h, in my flaming currie, amid the shouts and exclamations of the astonished rabble, when the shaft of Cu-

pid, more potent than the thunderbolt of Jove, brought me, like another Phaeton, headlong from my chariot; for by the immortals, I caught the eye of a Venus, reclining on the summit of Ida, took her at her word, drove off the graces, leaped into her arms, and flew away with her at a tangent." "Deal less in the sublime," said the other; "this jargon is absolutely unintelligible; tell me, in plain language, what she is, and where you found her." "*Eh bien mon cher ami*, to be plain with you then, she is by the immortals, she is more lovely than Venus, more stately than Juno, and more graceful than Minerva; I found her in a fair garden,

" where long she flourished,
" Grew sweet to sense, and lovely to the eye;
" Till at the last a cruel spoiler came,
" Cropt this fair rose and rifled all its sweetness,
" Then cast it like a loathsome weed away."

" Did you," returned the other; " then indeed you acted nobly; but, pray tell me the

name of this paragon of beauty, this fair rose whose sweetness you have rifled." " Her name, dash me Dick, but you are a rum one; for by the immortals, I am as ignorant of it as Vulcan. But she is the sister of a pettifogger, who is sometimes caught in the cobwebs he weaves to entangle others, and his name, pshaw! this d—ned affair, by the immortals, has confused my sensorium, ah! is Morcell."

I instantly rose from my chair, and almost frantic with rage, seized the stripling by the collar; "Puppy!" cried I, "how dare you thus boast of the deliberate seduction of an innocent woman?" "Why! who and what the devil are you?" replied the gay Adonis, grasping my arm with firmness;

"Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell,

.

"Thou com'st in such a questionable shape,

"That I will speak to thee;"

"Know then, that if you do not be off in a

twinkling, I will darken your peepers by the immortals, give you the go by, and send you to old Pluto in a tangent." "Despicable coxcomb," cried I, striking him in the face with violence, "beware how you trifle with one you have so grossly injured." Contrary to my expectation, he possessed courage, and immediately returned the blow. We instantly engaged; but he, with the skill of a Mendoza, beset me so furiously, that, being no pugilist, I was necessitated to give ground. The person to whom he had addressed himself now interfered, and with little difficulty separated us, for I was very desirous to decline the combat, after which they left the tavern, and I was suffered to meditate on my disgrace in silence.

The seduction of my sister, and the stigma it would, when made public, bring upon the character of my family, were additional sources of inquietude and regret. I had not strength of mind sufficient to bear this fresh calamity with

fortitude, and like a child burst into tears. The fate of Matilda instantaneously rushed across my mind, and added to the poignancy of my sorrow. I had deliberately and maliciously seduced her from the paths of innocence, from the calm endearing haunts of virtuous tranquillity, and brought her, in the full bloom of youth and beauty, to the cold and silent mansions of the dead. I had been led to this too, by revenge, one of the most detestable passions that can disgrace the human soul, and therefore, less entitled to excuse than the seducer of my sister; for he, no doubt, had yielded to the dictates of vanity, or the influence of libidinous desire. I reflected on the manly and dignified conduct of Ansley, on that trying occasion; but had not courage to imitate his example. He had commanded me to espouse his sister, or give him the satisfaction of a gentleman; I could not, I dared not act thus. “ Why?” cried I, in the tremor of

my soul, “ should I endeavour to deprive this man of existence, who has acted in a manner much less vitious than myself. Did not I also seduce a woman, perhaps more virtuous than my sister? Did not I blast her character, destroy her peace, and cut short her life? Crimes, the most of which this man has not yet committed. I will think of this action no more, but ascribe it to the fallibility of human nature.” These, though the suggestions of cowardice, were notwithstanding, the calm dictates of prudence, and I remained perfectly satisfied with my determination to let the affair drop for ever.

CHAPTER IX.

ON the following day I was somewhat surprised to receive a challenge from the youth with whom I had the preceding evening been engaged. I refused to accept it, and fearing lest he should, in the violence of his passion, resort to means less honourable, in order to obtain satisfaction, I immediately set out on foot, my purse being almost exhausted, for the city of Baltimore, in which I intended to commence business.

I hastened forward, resting occasionally on the way, until the approach of night, when upon inquiry, I found that my place of destination was not far distant. Thinking it useless

to stop, I continued to walk on as rapidly as my wearied limbs would suffer me. The night soon became extremely dark, and the thunder growling at a distance, “on the solemn verge of heaven,” portended a storm. I redoubled my pace, that I might reach town before it would commence. As I turned the corner of a wood, I descried by a sudden flash of lightning, a person walking slowly before me. I pushed forward and soon overtook him. He seemed to be lost in a reverie; I addressed him but received no answer. “Are you travelling to Baltimore,” said I, aloud.

“Sir?” replied he, as if awakened from a dream.

I repeated my question.

“Yes, sir, and if you are travelling that way we will be companions.” I answered in the affirmative, and we proceeded together, in profound silence. A thought now struck me that this man might be generous and possess

money, and that in all probability, he would grant me a small sum of which I stood in great want, if I were to solicit him for it. The trial, at all events, I thought not very hazardous. I was a total stranger, and the night dark, which prevented him from seeing my face, and consequently precluded the possibility of his ever being able to recognise me. Money was an article which I was always willing to possess, and to stop at nothing, however mean or despicable, in its acquisition. I determined therefore, to ask him for a trifle; and in a pitiful accent, which a long intimacy with duplicity enabled me to assume, requested him to grant me a few shillings, alleging that I had not tasted food that day, was wholly without money to procure it, and consequently almost in a state of starvation. “Your situation, sir,” said he, in a tone dictated by benevolence, “is certainly entitled to commiseration, and I am happy that providence has yet left it in my

power to relieve you, in some measure, from the wretchedness of your condition. Take," continued he, presenting me a piece of money which was inclosed in a small slip of paper, "take this, it is the half of all I possess upon earth, and may it have the tendency I wish."

We had by this time reached the suburbs of the city, and he, unwilling I suppose to be thanked for his generosity, immediately darted from me, and took another road. I entered the town, and hastened to the first house in which I discovered a light. It fortunately proved to be a small inn, and I took up my lodgings in it for the night. After I had been conducted to my bed chamber, a desire to ascertain how much I had received from the stranger, led me to examine the paper in which the piece was inclosed, and to my amazement, found it to be an eagle. I was perfectly enraptured with my treasure; for I had at first supposed it to be no more than a dollar. I blessed him ten thou-

sand times for his generous donation, and viewed it with as much rapture as ever a miser viewed his hoard. When my ecstasy had in some degree abated, I began more particularly to examine the paper which had contained the eagle, in order to discover if possible, the name of the person to whom I was indebted for a sum so much above my expectation, and to my astonishment and admiration, beheld the name of Ansley. Gracious God, I exclaimed, with a degree of enthusiasm, I had never before experienced, is it possible there exists a mortal so disinterestedly benevolent. All those actions to which I had been a witness, now recurred to my memory, and I thought I discovered something in them more than human. He appeared like the ministering angel of heaven, supplying the wants and relieving the distresses of man. I no longer thought him that ostentatiously generous character, I had sometimes imagined him to be. This last in-

stance of liberality, while it convinced me of the purity and disinterestedness of his motives, enabled me to see the durity of my heart, and the narrowness of my mind. I would scarcely have granted to my father, to whom I was indebted for my existence and support, the sum he gave me from a motive of pure benevolence and humanity.

There is something in generosity that forcibly claims the approbation of the most callous and avaricious, and I could have hugged him to my bosom, with all the fervour of affection, for this action which so far outstripped my conception of human benevolence. I inwardly shrunk from the comparison which I was unavoidably led to form, upon reflecting on my nocturnal adventure, between the nobleness of his conduct and the meanness and scurrility of mine. I had had the baseness, the narrowness of soul to solicit him for that of which I was not in immediate want, and he the humanity to grant

me what would have reflected honour on the heart of the greatest favourite of fortune. Exhausted with reflection and the fatigue of my journey, I sunk into the arms of sleep, and enjoyed for a few hours the balm of repose.

CHAPTER X.

THE court was fortunately sitting in Baltimore at the time of my arrival; I made application and was admitted. In a few days I received the books which I had requested Dorsey to send me, and established an office in the most central part of the town. For some months I succeeded beyond my most sanguine expectations, and began again to entertain the hopes of shortly becoming opulent, but I was once more to be deceived. Dissipation, to which I now addicted myself, with the most unbounded licentiousness, caused me to neglect my professional duties, and ultimately to lose my practice. My time was spent either among

men who, like myself, were wholly devoted to the pleasures of the bottle, or among women of the most abandoned character, who laboured to entangle me in the intricate mazes of female cunning and artifice. I was soon known in all the brothels which the town contained, and by their wretched inhabitants, celebrated as the most accomplished dasher the world had produced.

Thus I continued to murder my time, to ruin my health, and to destroy my reputation, without foreseeing the consequence that would necessarily result from such a proceeding, until poverty, horrid meagre poverty again stared me in the face. I was now enabled to see the folly and impropriety of my conduct, and determined strenuously to avoid the guilt of similar indiscretion. I resolved to abandon those wretches by whom I had been almost reduced to the brink of ruin, and to devote my time exclusively to my professional avoca-

tions. To this virtuous resolution, which avarice and the fear of starvation had alone induced me to make, I for several months tenaciously adhered, and paid the utmost attention to the various functions of my profession.

While thus laudably employed, I received a letter from my father, informing me of the elopement of my sister, and his own indisposition, and requesting me, at the same time, to visit him immediately. As I had always entertained a sincere attachment for my father, I readily obeyed his summons, and set out instantly for his habitation. I travelled with all imaginable expedition, and arrived just in time to witness his final dissolution. He had taken, I was told, an emetic, a few hours previously to my arrival, which, together with the fever, had created an inordinate thirst, to quench which he had thoughtlessly drunk a considerable quantity of cold water, that soon put a period to his life. I was sensibly affected by his sud-

den death, for he had ever been to me the most affectionate of parents; but as grief was a passion that I was not of a disposition long to indulge, I soon recovered my wonted serenity of mind, which was indeed accelerated by finding that he had bequeathed me all his real and personal property, to the amount of four thousand dollars. This was a sum which, notwithstanding the recent death of my parent, and the scandalous elopement and degradation of my sister, afforded me the most exquisite pleasure. My ruling passion, the love of wealth, was thus in some degree gratified, and I was happy.

I now made several feeble efforts to discover the retreat of my sister; but knowing that I should be under the necessity of maintaining her, when found, my inquiries were very limited, and soon totally relinquished. Her clandestine departure was to me not in the least surprising, she had never been dear to my father, who, with the utmost cruelty, would often upbraid and insult

her for the most trivial offence. In his house therefore, it is not to be supposed she would enjoy the tranquillity of a moment, after the discovery of her seduction. To avoid then, the reproaches of her father, and the scoffs and insults of her acquaintance she had, I justly imagined, abandoned her home, her relations, and her friends, to seek some more hospitable shelter, in places where she was wholly unknown.

The present state of society has ever appeared to me somewhat defective; but custom often renders men obstinate in absurdities, and that which is now, abstractedly considered, evidently repugnant to justice and humanity, will perhaps never be otherwise, until truth, divine and immutable truth, has dispelled the mists of ignorance, broken through the trammels of prejudice, and emitted its mild and benignant radiance into the dark and gloomy labyrinths of the human mind. Women who

are, it is erroneously asserted, mentally feeble by nature and educated with the utmost tenderness and delicacy, must be exposed to the derision, the animadversion of a pitiless world, for the slightest deviation from rectitude, the smallest aberration from virtue; while man, whose comprehensive mind can grasp the wide extended circle of science, and almost penetrate into futurity, is permitted to loll in the lap of voluptuousness, and range at large in the parterre of fashionable vice, without detriment to his interest or injury to his reputation.

CHAPTER XI.

I CONTINUED in the country several months after the death of my father, during which I pretended to be inconsolable for my loss, and publicly shed the hypocritical tear of affected sorrow, with a view to impress my neighbours with the belief that I possessed a feeling heart. Men, however wicked, always desire to be regarded with affection by the rest of mankind. I began at length to make preparations for my departure to Baltimore, and that I might not be obliged to return again, advertised my estate for sale.

A few days however, previously to its intended commencement, I met with an adven-

ture which had well nigh cost me my life. I had walked out one afternoon for the purpose of amusing myself with an elegant fowling piece which I had just purchased, and being uncommonly successful was detained by my love of sport, until late in the evening. As I was slowly returning home, I casually passed by the little hut in which I had seen the remains of Matilda, on the night prior to her interment.

A desire to know the fate of my child propelled me with an irresistible impulse to the door of the cottage. Until that moment, I had never thought of making any inquiry concerning the unfortunate offspring of my guilt; indeed I had sometimes indulged the hope that it had paid the debt of nature. I entered the hut, supposing that the negro woman in whose arms I had once seen my infant, was still its only inhabitant, and who, in all probability, could give me some satisfactory information

respecting it, but I was disappointed. The cabin seemed wholly deserted, a profound silence reigned within, disturbed only at intervals by the lonely chirpings of some solitary insect. I sat down on a small block which appeared to have served the late occupant of the cot as a stool, and sunk into a reverie. While my imagination was busied in retracing the painful scenes of departed misery, I was suddenly seized by the breast, and casting up my eye, beheld a man whose face I could not distinctly see, preparing to plunge a dagger into my bosom. I instinctively grasped his arm and endeavoured to wrest the weapon from his hand, but being less nervous and athletic than my opponent, I fell to the ground, and in my struggle received a wound in the shoulder, from the ruffian, which with a contusion in the head occasioned by my fall, instantly deprived me of reason. How long I thus continued, I know not; but when I recovered my senses, I

found myself in my own chamber, and a person who proved afterwards to be a physician, standing by my bed. I immediately recollected the peril I had been in, previously to the temporary privation of my reason, and hastily demanded if the ruffian had been arrested. I was answered in the negative; this disappointment was vexatious, for I was extremely desirous to bring the villain to condign punishment. I had no doubt but he was the same person I had seen lurking under my window, immediately after the fire in M.....h, and who then expressed his intention to murder me on the following night. I was more than ever at a loss to know who he could be, whose eternal enmity I had thus provoked. It was in vain I endeavoured to think of a person so much my foe as to wish to put an untimely period to my existence: the more I conjectured, the more bewildered I became in the perplexing mazes of ineffectual thought. To exert, how-

ever, every effort within the scope of my ability, in order to discover this cold-blooded assassin, and to inflict on him that punishment which he merited, was my fixed determination, when the restoration of my strength would enable me to do so.

The physician who attended me, was fortunately well acquainted with the surgical part of his profession, and also attentive to his patients, a more efficacious remedy than any the *materia medica* can furnish. By his skill therefore, and attention, my wound, which had at first assumed an alarming appearance, was in a few weeks so far healed, as to enable me to walk out without much pain or inconvenience.

On the day subsequent to the occurrence of this adventure, I received from one of my servants the following information; that he had found me in the hut already mentioned, being led into it by a deep groan, which he chanced to hear as he was returning from a neighbour-

ing house, to which I had that afternoon sent him; and that a young man, whose name he had forgotten, was standing by me, but left the cabin immediately after his entrance.

“ Did you not,” said I, “ speak to the person whom you saw in the cottage?”

“ No, sir! I was so much astonished, when I discovered you lying on the floor and bleeding, that I was unable to move much less to speak.”

“ Did you ever see the youth before?” “ I once saw him in Edwards’s cottage, where I recollect he struck you for beating the old man.” “ Is it possible?” said I, “ it could not have been Ansley.”

“ His name is Ansley,” replied William, “ and I recollect his sister died a few years ago in our neighbourhood.”

Why Ansley should leave Baltimore, and come again into the country, without any apparent inducement, was somewhat incompre-

hensible, and, such is the human kind, I began to entertain a suspicion of his guilt; the circumstance too of his leaving me, directly after my servant entered the hut, without attempting to assist in conveying me home, which, from the generosity of his nature, I supposed he would have done had he not been guilty, tended to corroborate that suspicion. The injury I imagined, which I had done him, still rankled in his breast, and urged him to perpetrate the deed which has already been mentioned: but it is natural for us to judge of the motives which stimulate others to action, from those by which we would, in similar cases, be ourselves actuated. I therefore concluded, that Ansley, although I had seen him exhibit instances of generosity and forgiveness, that would have reflected honour on the greatest hero of antiquity, was certainly the person who sought to deprive me of life. The exalted opinion I once entertained of him was instantly

changed, and I now conceived him to be one of the most desperate villains that ever disgraced humanity. Revenge again took complete possession of my mind, and determined me to make him suffer that punishment which I thought he so eminently and deservedly merited.

CHAPTER XII.

UPON inquiry, I found that Ansley had gone to Baltimore, which compelled me to postpone the gratification of my revenge to a more distant period. My sale, which had been procrastinated in consequence of my indisposition, now commenced, and I without regret disposed of the seat of my ancestors, and every thing of which I was in possession, excepting William, my negro servant, whose fidelity I had sufficiently tried, and on whose integrity I could place the utmost reliance. My wound being now healed, and my affairs thoroughly adjusted, I determined to leave the habitation in which I had spent the happiest moments of

my life, and take up my residence exclusively in Baltimore. Previously however, to my departure, I again endeavoured to discover whether or not my hapless infant still existed, and found, somewhat to my surprise, that it was yet in being, and lived with a gentleman who resided not far from the plantation of Wilson, to whose house, it will be recollected, I had gone the day succeeding the fire in M.....h. As I had a particular desire to see my child, I determined to visit my friend on my way to Baltimore, when I might have an opportunity to gratify that desire, and accordingly set out for his plantation, at which I arrived late in the evening. He received me, contrary to my expectation, with a degree of coolness bordering on disgust. I was surprised at this reception, so very different from what I had hitherto met with in his house; I desired him to let me know if I had offended him. "Sir," said he,

“ from what has happened I wish to be no longer in habits of intimacy with you. Your conduct has forfeited that friendship which once subsisted between us.”

“ To what do you allude,” said I with apparent displeasure.

“ To that,” replied he, with the utmost indignation, “ which ought to damn your character to posterity, and which, if you possessed the smallest particle of human feeling, would blast your peace of mind for ever.”

“ I am really at a loss to know,” said I, wishing to discover the particular source of his displeasure, “ what you mean.”

“ My meaning,” replied he, with emphasis, “ is to you not in the least ambiguous; you will not pretend to deny the seduction of Matilda Ansley, the unfortunate young woman whom by your inhumanity you afterwards brought to an untimely grave.”

As he said this, he turned from me with the utmost disgust, and immediately left the room. I soon discovered that he had received his information from the person with whom I had been told my child resided, and knowing him to be a character whose resentment when once excited it was impossible to appease, I quitted the house, and hastened to M.....h. It was not without some apprehensions of danger, I again entered the town from which I had been so ignominiously expelled; its inhabitants I imagined had not yet forgotten me, and were consequently still desirous to inflict on me that punishment which they supposed I merited; but as there was no other place in which I could conveniently lodge that night, necessity compelled me to risk my person once more in M.....h. I immediately rode to the house where I formerly boarded, and found the family, who received me with the utmost cordiality, just preparing to go to a play, which

was to be performed that evening by a company of strollers from Philadelphia. They solicited me to join their party, and thinking that I should not there be molested, I yielded to their solicitations, and accompanied them to the performance.

CHAPTER XIII.

WE found the room in which the players performed, and which was fitted out and decorated for the purpose of theatrical exhibition, though large and spacious, considerably crowded. We however shoved forward, with some difficulty, and seated ourselves where we could see the performance without molestation. While we were waiting, in momentary expectation of the curtain rising, a young fellow, whom I soon discovered to be my old acquaintance Rattle, the youth who seduced my sister, staggered into the room, apparently much intoxicated, and seated himself with the utmost *sang froid* in front of the stage. At his

entrance I felt greatly agitated, fearing lest he should recognise me and disturb the audience. But the rising of the curtain soon put an end to my inquietude, and suffered me to breathe again with freedom.

The play was Shakspeare's comedy, "As you like it." During the performance Rattle spoke so audibly as frequently to disturb the players, and draw the attention of the audience upon him. He was repeatedly desired to be silent; but unfortunately he had gotten in the humour of speaking, and not even his immortals could check the volubility of his tongue. "Dash me, but you're a rum one, Mr. Moralist," cried he, when the moralizing Jacques appeared; "and if you do not give us less of that stuff, by the immortals, we shall have d—ned little occasion for the sons of Æsculapius; for by all that's physical, I am as agitated about the intestines, as if I had swallowed all the salts in Christendom." "Silence!" was

vociferated from every corner of the room. "Dash me," cried Rattle, with redoubled vehemence, "but you're shallow ones; what, do you take me for a walking statue, a *memento mori*; if you do, by the immortals you're out; I'm none of your mute ones. No, d— me, I never sit 'like patience upon a monument, smiling at grief,' when the risible phiz of Momus strikes my peepers; perdition, by the immortals, perdition to all the open mouthed sons of admiration, who cannot spread their pinchers, when the spirit of fun enters their wonder-struck sensorium." He was here interrupted by two gentlemen of his acquaintance, who prevailed upon him to quit the room.

The play being over, I was preparing to leave the tavern in order to return home, when my unlucky visage caught the eye of Rattle. "Hollo, Morcell," he exclaimed, staggering up to me the moment he saw me; "what in

the name of Jupiter brought you here? dash me but you came, I suppose, to behold the medical operations of comedy; for by all that's physical, this d—ned play has made me evacuate at both ends ever since I left the room."

I could not avoid smiling, though I was surprised at this strange and unexpected address; and, notwithstanding I could at that moment have inflicted on him the most excruciating tortures, I saluted him with the greatest apparent cordiality, and informed him of the motive that brought me to M.....h, and of my intention to leave it on the following morning.

"No, by all that's physical," said he, grasping me by the hand, "you sha'n't give me the go by to-night; for dash me, although you're a rum one, if you sha'n't revel with me in the joys of Bacchus, until

"Bright Phœbus has mounted the chariot of day."

"Upon my word sir, I do not comprehend

you," said I. "Dash me, my dear fellow, if that matters a whit; follow me, and by the immortals I'll make my meaning known in a twinkling. I'll show you how to guggle claret, overturn tables, upset chairs, break bottles, and be off at a tangent. Come, come, d—n all old animosities, none but the morose, the peevish, and the sober, think of revenge; follow me, and d—n me we'll have fun."

I endeavoured to stifle the resentment which still rankled in my breast, and entreated to be excused, alleging a prior engagement, as my only reason for not complying with his request.

"Pshaw, d—n all engagements; by the immortals they are only made to be broken, and a man of spirit, by all that's physical, observes them only when they conduce to his pleasure. Come, come, Morcell, lay aside those old fashioned notions, and taste with me the never-

ending joys of Bacchus. Dash me, my dear fellow, if I don't abominate these Mr. Gravities who think it sacrilege, by all that's physical, to push about the tankard, and enjoy the sweet pleasures of Venus and wine; come, I'll introduce you to a set of noble fellows, by the immortals, who like me,

“ Laugh, and dance, and drink and sing,

“ And kick all care behind them.”

I saw it was impossible to get rid of him, and therefore silently followed him into an adjoining room, where several young men were sitting.

“ Well my noble lads,” cried he, the moment he entered, “ I've brought you a rum one, and dash me, if you don't keep your peepers in motion, he'll give you the go-by, and be off at a tangent.”

“ You must pardon,” said one of them, whose name was Dixon, rising from his seat and politely saluting me, “ you must pardon the inurbanity of our volatile companion.”

“ Dash me Jack,” vociferated Rattle, before I had time to reply, “ you’re eternally thrusting in your d—n’d inurbane lingo, which makes me, by all that’s physical, as completely volatile as if I had been fifty times bled and purged by the immortal Sangrado.” The company laughed obstreperously, and my giddy companion conducted me in triumph to a chair. Confident that I should be free of expense, I felt perfectly satisfied with my situation, and continued to pour down the wine without intermission, until I was nearly in the same state with Rattle. In a few hours, my bacchanalian companions began to lose the faculty of speech, and gradually to sink into the arms of the irresistible god of sleep; but not being my-

self so much intoxicated as to be wholly unable to walk, I staggered to my old lodgings, and retired to bed, completely sick of my night's debauch.

CHAPTER XIV.

I ROSE late the next morning, much indisposed. At breakfast Mrs. D. my old landlady, a woman of good sense and great suavity of manners, began to animadvert on the conduct of Rattle, who had been so troublesome to the company on the preceding night. "I have known that young man," said she, "for several years. He possesses some virtues, but many vices; his days and nights are spent in a continual routine of folly and dissipation; but his grand study is the seduction of women, of whom he takes every advantage, the elegance of his person and the opulence of his fortune give him the power of exercising. He has by

his misconduct almost broken the heart of his father, who has done every thing in his power to reclaim him; but finding all his efforts ineffectual, has abandoned him in despair, and given him full liberty to follow the vitious course to which his inclination leads him. His only sister, who now lives with her father, and who endeavours with the mildest and most benignant attention, to meliorate the grief and agony of her beloved parent, which her unfortunate and misguided brother has occasioned, has also laboured, but in vain, to recal him to a sense of that duty which he has so long forsaken. His good genius seems to have abandoned him, and he plunges without consideration into the resistless whirl of vice and dissipation, which will I fear too soon overwhelm him."

"Pray madam," said I wishing to change the subject, "can you inform me what became of

the widow, on whose account I was necessitated to leave M.....h?"

"Yes sir, she died shortly after your departure for Baltimore, and her helpless children have since been supported by the charity of some benevolent person, whom no one has yet been able to discover."

I instantly concluded that this person was no other than Ansley. His conduct appeared to me perfectly incomprehensible; I could not conceive how a man who had, in some instances, acted with a generosity, a magnanimity that almost transcended belief, could for so long a period of time, harbour a desire to murder his fellow creature. There was an evident inconsistency in all this, that I could not reconcile to reason, that a man who certainly possessed a heart susceptible of every noble and generous feeling, should so far change his nature as to commit an act so glaringly repugnant to humanity as that of which he had been

guilty in attempting my life, was to me perfectly strange and inconceivable. This late display however, of the generosity of his nature, did not tend to destroy the resolution which I had formed of taking final exemplary vengeance, for I yet felt confident that he was the cold blooded assassin, who had aimed the deadly blow at my heart, and who still wished to deprive me of life.

After breakfast I took leave of Mrs. D. and her family, and set out for Baltimore, which I reached early the next day.

Upon my arrival, the first object that occupied my attention was Ansley. I reflected on the most proper and effectual mode of obtaining the gratification of my revenge. I knew my incapacity to prove the fact of his attempting my life. My servant, the only witness I could produce, was a slave; according to the laws of my country, he was incompetent to give evidence for or against me. His tes-

timony amounted only to mere presumption of Ansley's guilt. He had seen him leave the hut upon his entrance, and could not positively swear that he was the person who stabbed me; and however strongly the circumstance of his being found near me at that moment might operate to produce a conviction of his guilt, yet this I could not prove, in consequence of the slavery of my servant. The idea therefore of accomplishing the object in view, by legal process, was totally futile and nugatory. Another mode suggested itself to my mind: *Assassination*; yes, assassination.

Let not the reader be astonished: from the first remove from innocence to the most horrible abysses of guilt, the descent is easy and imperceptible. We frequently know not how deeply we have plunged into iniquity, before we find ourselves irrevocably lost. The first step from virtue is usually but little regarded; it is not until we have gone too far to return

that we discover our irremediable destruction. The period of reformation is too often postponed, under the idea that we shall hereafter have time sufficient for that purpose. It requires exertion to destroy the influence of habit. We are naturally prone to indolence: that which is to be done by labour we are always willing to postpone from time to time, until our power is perhaps removed, or our inclination destroyed. We seldom institute a regular inquiry into the propriety or impropriety of an action we are about to perform, because it requires labour, to which we are averse. Thus it is we proceed, either fearing to examine our conduct, or wishing to avoid toil, until we become lost to God, to society and to ourselves.

I conceived assassination as the most proper method to accomplish my end. I could clandestinely snap the thread of his existence, and thus obtain full, ample and terrible revenge. I might do this too without present inconve-

nience or future injury. No one would suspect me. My standing in life precluded suspicion, being a member of the bar, and my acquaintance with Ansley unknown. I might therefore remain unsuspected and consequently secure. I reconciled the horrid deed I wished to perpetrate to my mind with little difficulty. I reasoned thus: has he not attempted to deprive me of life? has he not pursued me, with the malignity of a fiend, wherever I have gone, with a view to execute his murderous design? is it not likely too he will continue to pursue me, until I have fallen the victim of his vengeance? I ought to retaliate; it is but acting in obedience to the great law of nature; it is but just that I should, by terminating his existence effectually prevent him from terminating mine. I am therefore determined he shall no longer be an object of dread or of terror to me.

This infamous determination, I conceived to be consistent with the most rigid principles

of justice, and regardless of the consequences that would most likely result from the commission of the crime I meditated, I set immediately about putting it into execution. To that effect I dispatched my servant into every quarter of the town, in quest of Ansley, for the purpose of accurately ascertaining his place of residence, that I might there commit the deed of murder; but he returned with the information that Ansley had left Baltimore, and would not be back for several weeks.

This disappointment was extremely troublesome, particularly as I had come to the fixed determination of effecting my purpose immediately. I was therefore unavoidably compelled to wait with patience until Ansley should again return; and that my mind might not misgive me at that important crisis, I endeavoured to make it firm, by constantly persuading myself that he merited death, and that the deed I was about to perpetrate was consequently just.

CHAPTER XV.

ONE evening, about a week after my arrival in Baltimore, as I was walking down the street, wholly engrossed with my projected plan of assassination, I felt a gentle tap on the shoulder, and looking round beheld Rattle. "Hol-lo! my dear fellow," cried he, "what in the name of Jupiter are you musing upon; one would think, by all that's physical, you were an anchorite, just emerged from your gloomy nook, where you had been fasting and praying these fifty years, for the good of our souls. Why, by the immortals, you look as grum as Don Quixote's Rosinante; come, come, my dear fellow, rouse up, cast from you that pesti-

ferous gravity, and follow the doctrine of the immortal Epicurus, ‘eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die.’”

Unwilling to be again seen in his company, and not knowing how to avoid it without offending him, which I did not wish to do, for I knew his prowess and dreaded it, I told him that I had some business of importance to transact that evening which demanded my immediate attendance.

“Dash me, Morcell, if you shall quit me, until we have guggled a few bottles of claret. I arrived but yesterday, and by the immortals am determined to have fun; so come, let us hie to some tavern, and spend the evening in mirth and festivity.” I saw it was useless to object, and quietly followed him to an inn that happened to be convenient.

After we had been seated for a few moments, Rattle, with a countenance uncommonly grave, thus addressed me; “Morcell, I know I have

injured you, and dash me if I am not sorry for it; I have been guilty of many improprieties, among which I regret none more than that of having seduced your sister; for dash me, if I did not love her; yes, by the immortal gods, I loved her, and am now willing to repair the injury I have done you, by instantly taking her as my wife."

I could not avoid admiring this generous proposal, which it may readily be supposed, gave me a very favourable opinion of the goodness of his heart, and immediately informed him of her secret departure from my father's house, and of my total ignorance of the place to which she had gone.

This information seemed to depress him considerably, and he swallowed several glasses of wine, before he had power to speak, which he was about to do, when a number of young men abruptly entered the room, and interrupted our conversation. Among these was Dix-

on, who has already been cursorily mentioned, and who was one of Rattle's intimate acquaintance.

This youth was sent at an early age to England for the benefit of his education; but possessing neither industry nor talents, had advanced but slowly in learning. At the age of manhood, he made what is usually termed the *grand tour*; during which he acquired with some difficulty, a superficial knowledge of the French and Italian languages. This however, he conceived to be no inconsiderable acquisition, and therefore laboured on every occasion, to convince those of it with whom he associated. By frequently spouting while in England, in those societies which are there established for the improvement of youth in the art of speaking, he had attained a copiousness of language; and volubility of speech, rarely to be found in one of his age; but wishing, unfortunately, to be thought eloquent, and impro-

perly supposing that eloquence consisted alone in an inexhaustible fund of pompous epithets, and magnificent expressions, he very often became disgustingly bombastic.

At the death of his father, he returned to his native country, and as he was the only child, of course fell heir to his estate, which being pretty ample, afforded him an abundant opportunity to indulge himself in those vices which he had imbibed in England, and which he now endeavoured, not unsuccessfully, to disseminate in America.

With such a character, it may be easily believed, I formed an immediate intimacy, and as conformity of disposition has an invincible attraction, we soon became inseparable companions.

To him Rattle addressed himself the moment he entered, and asked what news he brought from M.....h. “ Dash me, my dear fellow, but I suppose they are grievously la-

menting my departure, for by all that's physical I gave them the go-by in a neat way, and amid the tears, sighs and groans of ostlers, cooks and scullions, dashed forward, by the immortals, with a rapidity that made them gape with astonishment. You know Sweep-stake and Cut-purse; but d— me they are known from the Arctic to the Antarctic circle. Well, I hitched them to my flamer, drove tandem, snapped my whip, gave a loud huzza and flew off at a tangent; for by the immortals, I had tipped Bacchus the wink, whistled in the ear of Cupid, and made the gloomy countenance of Melpomene spread with ecstatic delight."

"And therefore entitled to the eternal applause of all the gods and goddesses that were ever enthroned on the lofty summit of Olympus," said Dixon; "but as to your question, I am extremely sorry it is utterly out of my power to give it a satisfactory answer; for my budget of common-place intelligence is at pre-

sent very contracted. However, there was a report in general circulation ere I left M.....h, that contaminated abode of tatterdemallions, that the benevolent and excessively liberal person was at length discovered, who it seems, had the unparalleled generosity to take under his immediate protection and fostering guardianship, the helpless and woe-begotten offspring of an unfortunate widow, who paid the last sad debt of nature a few months since, in consequence it is said, of the unparalleled inhumanity of some despicable and purse-picking pettifogger."

"*Bravissimo*," exclaimed Rattle, smiling; "dash me if you are a whit inferior to Demosthenes or Cicero; by all that's physical, I would have you to mount the rostrum and harangue the gaping rabble, until they are as surfeited with unparalleled generosity, and as disgusted with unparalleled inhumanity, as I am, by the immortals, with your unparalleled

lingo; but dash me, my dear fellow, let us hear the name of this second Scipio, who is so remarkable for his generosity.” “*Ah le diable, monsieur, je suis bien fâché*, I cannot gratify your curiosity; for having launched into the irresistible whirl of intoxicating delight, and plunged into the pellucid stream of imaginary felicity, since his name was wafted to my listening ear, I have totally forgotten it; but the imagination yet haunts me, that he is the same individual to whom fortune afforded the exquisite gratification of rescuing your lovely sister from the contemplated grasp of instantaneous death.”

“What, Ansley,” vociferated Rattle, “d—me but he’s a noble fellow, come let us drink perdition to his enemies.”

At this moment a poor blind woman entered the room, conducted by a boy, and solicited us for charity. Her deportment was dignified, and her countenance, notwithstanding the privation of her sight, still possessed the last in-

gering vestiges of departed beauty. Rattle gave her a chair, and she sat down. I discovered a tear start in her eye, and instantly glide down her pallid cheek. This kindness was unusual. She had been accustomed to severe treatment. It touched her to the soul, and she let the tear fall. She began and told her tale. Never was mortal more eloquent. There was a vigour, an energy in her expressions, and a grandeur in her sentiments, that evinced a mind of no ordinary cast. After describing her former condition, the happiness, the contentment, she once enjoyed in the society of her friends and dearest relatives, while in the hey-day of youth, and in the bloom of health and beauty; and after giving a rapid sketch of her life, and the cause of her misfortunes, she concluded with portraying the wretchedness of her present state in the melting language of genuine misery. She now paused in expectation of receiving a trifling boon; but Dixon, to

my astonishment, seizing a glass of wine, instantly dashed it into her face, and was about to repeat the inhuman experiment, when Rattle arrested his arm, and furiously exclaimed; “Hold sir! the moment you attempt to do that again, by the eternal gods that moment shall be your last.” The glass fell from his hand, and he quivered like an aspen. I was in the same situation, and the whole company stood aghast. We were however, soon relieved by the exit of Rattle, with the poor woman, whom he desired to follow him. I immediately arose, and accompanied by Dixon, sallied out of the tavern in a state of inebriation, and staggered to my lodgings.

CHAPTER XVI.

THREE weeks were now nearly elapsed, without any intelligence of Ansley, and I began to despair of having an opportunity to accomplish my diabolical purpose. His absence was to me a source of considerable regret; my anxiety to see him was ungovernable; I wished for his arrival with a degree of solicitude I can with difficulty describe. I experienced a sort of exquisite pain, in the idea that I should perhaps not be able to meet with him before my mind changed. He seemed to me to have divined my intention, and to have absented himself with a view to elude the contemplated blow. This I conceived to be

another evidence of his guilt, or why shun me thus cautiously. If he had been innocent of the crime with which I charged him, he would not thus studiously have avoided me. Innocence has nothing to fear, guilt every thing. The apprehension of betraying himself, should chance throw him in my way, had perhaps driven him from Baltimore; true, it was said, he intended to return, but this he might have circulated the more effectually to screen himself from suspicion. This circumstance contributed more than ever to fix my determination, and to increase my desire of revenge.

One morning, as I was musing on the subject which usually engrossed my thoughts, I received from Rattle an invitation to tea. This invitation I readily accepted, principally from a desire to see his sister, whose personal beauty and mental accomplishments I had heard much extolled. In the evening, I repaired at the appointed hour to his house, and was

ushered into a magnificent apartment, in which Maria, his sister, and a numerous collection of gentlemen and ladies were assembled. I was forcibly struck with the exquisiteness of her beauty the moment I entered; next to Matilda, she was the most lovely woman I had ever beheld; tall, graceful and dignified. Her eyes were dark, brilliant and full of genius, and her countenance calculated to express the varied emotions of her soul, and the most complicated feelings of her mind. When she smiled, it was the benignant smile of an angel, while contemplating the virtues of man. She was one on whom a person might gaze for ever, with increasing delight, and

“ One that in the essential vesture of creation.

“ Did bear all excellency.”

After being announced to the company, I took a seat by her, and we entered into conversation. I soon discovered that the elegance

of her mind was not less remarkable than that of her person. Her reading seemed to be as accurate as it was extensive, and her language, embellished with all the graces of rhetoric, gave a brilliancy to her style of conversation that rendered it perfectly fascinating. We continued to converse for some time, on a variety of subjects, in all of which she displayed a quickness of comprehension, and readiness of conception really astonishing. I listened, with a degree of pleasure almost bordering on rapture, to her sallies of gaiety, and occasional flights of fancy. I was in a continual tumult of delight, and sometimes burst into peals of obstreperous laughter, but I was not suffered to enjoy this pleasure long.

I was soon interrupted by the entrance of Rattle, who to my surprise was followed by Ansley. I started involuntarily from my seat; his unexpected appearance completely disconcerted me, and for some time I scarcely knew what I did.

Rattle advancing took me by the hand, "Morcell, permit me to introduce you to my friend Ansley, one of the most noble fellows, by the immortals, nature ever endowed with life."

"I am already acquainted with him," said I, sarcastically.

Ansley smiled contemptuously. I regarded him with peculiar intensesness. His countenance betrayed no emotion. It still possessed that manly openness which formed its prominent characteristic. I hoped to discover in it a fresh evidence of his guilt, but I was mistaken; no alteration was visible.

What consummate hypocrisy! He could conceal the very workings of his soul; he could quiet the palpitations of his heart; he could silence the murmurings of conscience; this was wonderful. His guilt was to me perfectly evident; no reasonable creature, after hearing

the evidences that I had, could doubt it; yet he betrayed no signs of guilt, no marks of conscious villany. Every thing within seemed to be in a state of calm serenity; no turbulent emotion, no tormenting recollection disturbed the tranquillity of his mind. I caught his eye; it penetrated me to the soul. I could not bear the intensity of his gaze, and hung down my head in confusion. He took a seat by Maria, and they immediately entered into conversation. I eyed her attentively, and thought I observed her regard him with a look of tenderness, that seemed to evince a more than ordinary partiality.

Ah! cried I mentally, with a triumph I could with difficulty conceal, thou shalt not, sweet nymph, long enjoy the pleasure of his society. To-night, yes to-night he dies.

Pleased with the idea of being at last able to rid myself of a detested enemy, I smiled infernally, and rose, with an intention to leave the

apartment, for the purpose of making preparation to execute the design I had formed.

Rattle supposing I was offended, seized me by the arm, and forcibly detained me. "What in the name of Jupiter would you be after, why, by the immortals, you seem as restless as if you were twitched by the tweezers of a harpy; come, my dear fellow, wait until we have quaffed a little of the female nectar, in other words, stop until we have taken tea." I consented, and again took my seat. I endeavoured to compose myself, but could not succeed.

The company was now considerably increased, yet still Ansley occupied the entire attention of Maria. My heart broiled with envy, and wishing to prevent him from ingrossing the whole of the conversation, which now seemed to grow peculiarly interesting, I took up a book that lay on a table before me, and that happened to be the poems of Burns,

which I had never before seen, and requested Maria to give me her opinion of that poet.

“ My opinion of him,” answered she with ineffable sweetness, “ is certainly great. There never did exist a man who possessed a more masterly talent for poetry than Burns; he had a soul susceptible of the nicest and most delicate feelings, to which he gave expression in the most simple and pathetic language. His poetry is the effusion of a tender and feeling heart, and will live as long as nature and simplicity are admired.”

“ True,” exclaimed Ansley, with emphasis, “ he was indeed the very child of nature; he paints the rural scenery of his country with the rich and glowing pencil of a master; but, poor fellow, to the disgrace of mankind, he was suffered to linger out his existence in penury and want. I recollect,” continued he, “ a very beautiful verse in his ‘ *Cotter’s Saturday Night,*’ which, upon my first perusal of that

poem, struck me so forcibly that I have never since forgotten it; it runs thus, and he eyed me significantly:

“ Is there in human form, that bears a heart—

“ A *wretch*, a *villain*, lost to love and truth!

“ That can with studied, sly, ensnaring art,

“ Betray sweet Jenny’s unsuspecting youth?

“ Curse on his perjured arts! dissembling smooth!

“ Are honour, virtue, conscience, all exil’d?

“ Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,

“ Points to the parents, fond’ling o’er their child,

“ Then paints the ruin’d maid, and their distraction wild!”

Rattle immediately arose and left the room; while I, whom Ansley had particularly in view, sat still and apparently unmoved.

“ I must confess,” said Dixon, addressing himself to Ansley with the utmost *sang froid*, “ that I can neither see nor discover any particular, striking or prominent beauties in the effusion you did us the honour this moment of recapitulating. It certainly is as vastly inferior to these sublime lines of the elegant Ariosto,

L'amante per aver quil che desia,
Senza guardar che Deo tutt ode, e vede,
Avviluppa promesse, e guiramente,
Che tutti spargen poi per l'aria iventi.

as a diminutive molehill is to the tremendous and cloud-capt Vesuvius."

Ansley smiled, "And pray sir," said he, "will you be so kind as to translate those lines, for the edification of the company who perhaps do not understand Italian."

Dixon not supposing that Ansley understood the language, readily complied with his request, and gave a translation which had no kind of connexion with the original.

"Maintenant peut-être, monsieur, you are satisfied."

"Perfectly sir," replied Ansley, with a significant smile.

"Of what sir," said Dixon, evidently hurt by Ansley's manner.

“Of that sir, which ought no longer to be your characteristic, *ignorance*.”

Dixon muttered something to himself, and remained afterwards quite mute.

Ansley again addressing Maria, I arose and left the house more incensed than ever, and immediately hurried to my dwelling. Muffling myself up in a large cloak, under which I concealed a small poniard, I again repaired to Rattle's, and placing myself in a dark alley adjoining his house, awaited the appearance of Ansley with the utmost impatience. I had not been long in my lurking place, before I heard the door open, and a person whose step I took to be that of Ansley walk out. The night being very dark prevented me from having a full view of him.

At this moment however, he coughed, which convinced me that it was no other than Ansley. Now thought I, as I drew forth the dagger, now I rid the world of a monster, and

myself of an enemy who has laboured to destroy me, and rushing suddenly from my place of concealment gave him a stab, by which he reeling, groaned and fell. I repeated my blow, and concluding that I had completely accomplished my purpose, hastened home with the utmost precipitation.

I entered my chamber and threw myself upon the bed. I felt for a few moments completely gratified; but the stormy turbulence of passion having subsided, reason began gradually to resume her empire, and to point out the enormity of the crime I had committed, and memory, tormenting memory, recalled to my recollection the many generous actions I had seen him perform, and filled me with regret and compunction. The consequences too, which would in all probability follow the discovery of the deed, now struck with full force my terrified imagination, and inspired me with the utmost dread and timidity. What, cried I

mentally, if I should ever be discovered as the perpetrator of this inhuman act, my life will perhaps be the forfeit. I will die the ignominious death of a villain, unpitied and unlamented. The thought was distracting, and my brain was maddened almost to frenzy.

CHAPTER XVII.

IN this state of mind I continued until worn out with mental fatigue, I sunk into a disturbed and agitated slumber, from which I was at last started by a noise in my chamber. I inquired who was there, but received no answer. I half raised myself from my bed, and looking around the room, discovered by the faint light of the moon, which then shone in at the window, the same figure I had seen the night on which Matilda expired.

Having nearly got rid of that childish fear with which I was wont to be disturbed, I suddenly sprang from my bed, and attempted to grasp it in my arms; but, uttering a horrid yell which almost congealed my blood with terror,

and at the same time drawing a poniard, it made a desperate lunge at my breast, (which I avoided by springing to one side,) and in an instant vanished from my sight. Astonishment, for a few moments, left me perfectly motionless. I knew not what to make of this mysterious visitor, whose nocturnal rambles gave me so much inquietude; there was something in it that transcended my comprehension.

On its first appearance, I had supposed it to be the apparition of Matilda, but had afterwards ascribed it to the agitation of an overheated imagination. This latter opinion subsequent reflection convinced me was the most rational, and therefore it had since occupied but little of my attention. Its second visit however, tended to eradicate that idea, and as I had not yet been able to destroy the belief of supernatural appearances, which from my ear-

liest childhood had remained deeply rooted in my mind, I felt firmly convinced, that what I had just seen was the apparition of Matilda. Under this impression and consequently terrified beyond conception, I called in my servant who lodged in the adjoining room, and ordered him to sit up with me during the remaining part of the night.

On the following morning, I received a visit from Dixon, to whom I related the strange and mysterious appearance of the phantom. He laughed at my childish credulity, as he termed it, and endeavoured to rally me on the absurdity of so ridiculous a notion. Finding he was not disposed to give credence to what I said on that subject, though I strove to corroborate it by oath, I deemed it proper to drop it.

Dixon had come to inform me, that Rattle had, on the preceding evening, been dange-

rously wounded by a person who had not yet been discovered.

“Rattle wounded,” cried I with astonishment; “where did it happen?” “Near his own dwelling,” replied Dixon; “as he was passing a dark alley that adjoins the mansion in which he resides, going I presume to the nocturnal abode of bloated dissipation, a desperate ruffian leaped from his den of darkness, and with his midnight dagger, stabbed him repeatedly in various parts of his corporal system, which it is imagined, he will not have the constitutional vigor to survive.”

I now found to my regret, that I had, instead of Ansley, stabbed the generous Rattle. This discovery afforded me much uneasiness, and I began to curse myself, for having by my rashness and precipitancy wounded, perhaps mortally, one for whom I really entertained an attachment. Still, however, I experienced some degree of pleasure in finding that both were

alive, and that I in all probability should escape detection and consequent punishment.

Deliberate reflection had sufficiently shown me the inutility and danger of thus obtaining the gratification of my revenge, and I therefore resolved to lay aside every idea of it for the future, and tamely submit to the imaginary insults and injuries I had received from Ansley without again attempting to avenge them.

In the course of the day I visited Rattle, whom I found in a dangerous situation; his physician however assured me, that his wounds were not mortal, and that by proper care and attention, he would soon be in a state of speedy convalescence; this assurance gave me infinite delight, principally from the affection I bore him, and I returned to my lodgings comparatively contented.

Search was made in every quarter of the town, and rewards offered for the apprehension of the assassin, who had attempted to murder

Rattle; but having no clue which could lead to a discovery, and not being an object of the remotest suspicion, I experienced no fear for my safety, and remained in a state of perfect security.

In the evening I was prevailed upon by Dixon to accompany him to a billiard room, for the purpose of recreation and amusement. A few moments after our entrance, two gentlemen came in with the same intention which had carried us there. With one of these, who began highly to extol his excellence of design and superiority of execution at the game, I immediately engaged, and in less than an hour lost several hundred dollars. Excessively chagrined and disappointed, I hastened to my dwelling, with a determination to regain on the following day, if possible, the sum I had lost, or lose what I had still in possession.

It was not without considerable trepidation

I went to bed; the terrific object of last night still haunted my fancy, and excited great uneasiness; I therefore once more compelled my servant to guard me during the night, in order to repel the intrusion of this demon of destruction.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE next day I again repaired with my now constant associate Dixon to the billiard room; fortune smiled at last on my efforts, and I experienced the satisfaction of dispossessing the person with whom I had been so unsuccessful on the preceding evening, of all he had previously won from me.

Elated with my success, I thoughtlessly continued to frequent this scene of vice, and inevitable destruction for several weeks, when to my eternal regret, I experienced the mortification of losing the whole of the fortune to which I had fallen heir, by the death of my father.

Thus destitute of the principal source of human happiness, money, I was compelled to dispose of my negro servant whom I had brought with me to Baltimore, and who was now all that remained of my father's wealth. This poor fellow having been raised from his infancy in our family, left me with much reluctance, and with many tears in his eyes.

“Master,” said he, as he took his leave of me, “I never supposed you would sell me. When we were boys, playing together one day, you promised never to part with me; you remember when you were skating, and broke through the ice, that I caught you as you were sinking and preserved your life, at the risk of my own; then too, master, you declared you would never sell me. Ah! how hard it is to be a slave; but master farewell! Although I am black, we —” we may meet again, he would have said, but could not utter it; tears prevented him, and he left me to join his new owner,

who was what is generally termed in America, a negro buyer. This man carried him to Georgia, where I afterwards learnt he soon died.

With the money which the sale of my servant produced I again hastened to the billiard table, with a view to make once more an effort to regain what I had previously lost.

There is something in gaming peculiarly fascinating to a mind fond of wealth; this fascination arises, in an eminent degree, from the constant expectation which such as are addicted to this species of vice entertain of rapidly acquiring riches; a fascination which, like that of the snake, leads us imperceptibly to certain ruin, and frequently to self-destruction. New disappointments beget new desires in perpetual succession, until the means by which they are gratified are removed or completely destroyed. We are then enabled to see the folly, the impropriety of our conduct; but then, alas! it is too late; beggary, wretchedness and all the

accumulated horrors of poverty stand up in dread array before us, and ultimately bring us to misery, despair or death.

I engaged with the same person with whom I had previously played, in the hope that fortune would now crown my exertions with success. I lost and won alternately, until eleven o'clock at night, when I was destined again to experience the mortification of losing every fraction I possessed on earth. Almost in a state of distraction, I hurried towards my dwelling, with a rapidity that sat every impediment at defiance.

The moon shone with inconceivable brilliancy, and all around me was perfectly still, save the voice of a watchman which occasionally disturbed the tranquillity of the scene. As I turned the corner of the house in which I boarded, I perceived a man passing up and down the pavement, whose hurried steps clearly indicated the restless agitation of his mind.

Alarmed to find a person whom, to my recollection, I had never before seen, walking at so late an hour near my door, I paused and listened with attention. His motion became more rapid; in a few moments he suddenly stopped, and casting his eyes towards heaven uttered something I took to be a prayer, in a low and inarticulate tone, then clinching a dagger which he drew from beneath his coat, he brandished it in the air and exclaimed, “Infernal villain! thou shalt die, it is a sacrifice I must make to the manes of a murdered father and sister. Morcell, damnable name, hated monster! but I will be revenged, yes, by the eternal and ever-living God, I will be revenged.”

My blood was almost congealed with horror, its circulation seemed to be impeded, and I breathed with difficulty. At length recovering from this deadly stupor, I hastened back as rapidly as my tottering limbs would enable me to the house which I had just left, where I ex-

pected to find Dixon with whom I intended to lodge; but every one had quit it, and I was obliged to pass the night alone in a tavern, for I had not the courage, after what I had heard, to return to the house in which I boarded.

CHAPTER XIX.

IT was in vain I endeavoured to sleep; my mind was too much agitated by fear and regret to enjoy repose. Reduced by my folly to a state of perfect indigence, and my life hourly threatened by a cold blooded murderer, whom to my knowledge I had never seen or injured, were evils I had not fortitude to support with patience. They tortured me to agony, and I groaned in the most excruciating anguish. How should I act? whither should I fly to avoid the dagger of this midnight assassin? He thirsted for my blood! nothing less than my life seemed to have power to glut his inhuman vengeance! he had solemnly sworn, by the eternal God,

that he would be avenged. He would no doubt labour to effect his purpose; every motion I made would be observed; I would be haunted from place to place, like the miserable victim of persecution, until an opportunity offered for the execution of his design. Wherever I fled I should be pursued, in whatever place of concealment I lurked I should behold the dagger suspended over my devoted head, and the demon of vengeance hovering around me. Where could I fly for safety; it would be useless to fly; he would discover my most hidden retreat. After the horrible oath which he had ejaculated, he would doubtless pursue me to the remotest verge of the earth; how then could I escape him? how avoid the snare which he would set to entangle me? My situation at this moment, was indeed lamentable; I knew not how to proceed; I knew not what measure to adopt to elude the impending blow. To go armed would be to make my enemy more cautious and cir-

suspect, and to go unarmed would be to render myself a more easy victim to his implacable hatred. I dared not stir from my habitation, for then I should be exposed to certain and inevitable danger. I was unacquainted with him; he might enter the house without my knowledge, and stab me before I was prepared for the attack. My sensations were poignant, my feelings complicated in the extreme; never until this moment was I so indescribably agonized.

Another circumstance tended to augment, if possible, the misery I endured. I was tormented with the dread of starvation; I had not a cent in the world, every fraction I possessed had been foolishly thrown away at the billiard table. I felt as if I should never regain what I had lost, and as if I were immoveably and unalterably fixed to a spot in the sphere of existence, beyond which I could not advance. I felt that poverty would be my constant atten-

dant, until the feverish dream of life was past, and that horrible starvation would finally close the scene of my sufferings. Such were my feelings; keen, poignant, agonizing.

Again I recurred to the villain I had seen walking before the door of my lodgings. Who he was I could not divine. He said that I had murdered his father and sister; but this afforded no clue by which I could discover him. I was not conscious to myself of having put any human being to death, either directly or indirectly, except the unfortunate Matilda, whose father I never knew. It was therefore certain Ansley was not the person. Indeed his voice, his stature, and his gait, all evidently tended to demonstrate the improbability of such a conjecture. I now recollected the mysterious expressions of the person I had observed standing under my window, after the conflagration in M.....h, and by comparing them with those I had this evening heard, immediately con-

cluded he was the same individual I had just seen; but who he was, or whence he came, I could not form the most distant conception. He seemed involved in a cloud of mystery I had not power to penetrate, and I relinquished the attempt as totally nugatory, useless and impossible.

But how should I elude him? By continuing in Baltimore I should, in all probability, fall a victim to his deadly antipathy; remove where I would within the precincts of the town, his vigilant and ever watchful enmity would enable him to discover my place of residence. To remain therefore, in Baltimore, I conceived to be extremely perilous and unsafe. Perhaps, by clandestinely quitting it, I should at least for a time suspend the contemplated blow. But there was another consideration which induced me to leave it. I could obtain no business, in consequence of the general notoriety of my character. I had, while

pursuing my profession, acted in a variety of instances with such glaring impropriety as to be almost universally censured and contemned; particularly in one which I have hitherto neglected to mention. It was this:

I had been employed by a poor mechanic to institute an action against a gentleman of considerable consequence in Baltimore, by whom he had been treated with great inhumanity. His case was indeed a hard one; but I did not pity it; my feelings were become too callous to be mollified by the melting influence of such a passion. I was invulnerable to the shafts of sympathy; a perpetual intercourse with scenes of inhumanity and oppression had rendered me indifferent to human suffering and insensible to human misery.

Roberts, the name of the mechanic, had rented a house of Langley, the person mentioned above, for a stipulated sum; to which he removed his wife, for whom he entertained the

most ardent attachment, and two small children, the tender offspring of reciprocal affection. She was a woman of considerable beauty, but ignorant and inexperienced. Langley was an adulterer; the marriage tie was no bar to the gratification of his lecherous desires. He felt no "compunctious visitings of conscience," in secretly entering the habitation of a virtuous pair, and destroying their domestic peace and happiness. Long habit had rendered such scenes familiar, and blunted the poignancy of feeling. He was opulent, and his character sustained but little injury.

Langley had seen the wife of Roberts. Her beauty pleased him, and he determined upon her destruction; he visited her, she yielded, and he triumphed. Their illicit commerce was continued for some time; the poor husband at last discovered the guilt of his wife. He flew to the house of the seducer, charged him with the crime, and threatened punishment. Lang-

ley became exasperated; called in several of his servants, and ordered them to chastise the unfortunate husband; they obeyed his commands, and poor Roberts was inhumanly abused. He hastened home, but his guilty wife was not to be found. She had been taken under the protection of Langley, who not satisfied with the revenge he had already obtained, ordered Roberts to be arrested on suspicion of theft. After his liberation, he applied to me to know what mode of conduct he should adopt. I advised him to have recourse to law; he did so; but on the day of trial, I was spoken to by Langley, who offered me a sum of considerable magnitude, if I would not defend Roberts. I pointed out to him the impropriety of such a procedure, and the injury my character would sustain, were I to accede to his offer; but gave him to understand that my defence should be as feeble as possible. He said he was satisfied, and I received the bribe. Roberts was cast

the transaction became public, and I was branded with infamy. This, among other instances of a less villanous nature, which had tended to reduce me in the estimation of the inhabitants of Baltimore, urged me to quit it.

I came therefore, to the resolution of departing on the following day for W....., in adherence to which, I arose early the succeeding morning, and made preparations for my immediate removal. Reduced, as I have before said, to a state of poverty, I found it necessary to proceed on foot to my place of destination, where I intended to re-adopt the profession which, after coming into the possession of my father's estate, I had relinquished.

Just as I was about to commence my journey, I met Dixon, who delivered me a letter, which he said was from Ansley. Surprised to receive a letter from him, I hastily opened it, and found to my astonishment that it contained a thirty dollar bank note, which he earnestly

intreated me to accept, informing me at the same time, of his knowledge of my reduced situation. This was beyond my conception. I had no idea of such disinterested generosity. Ansley was a character whose equal I had never met with in my intercourse with man; my notions of human virtue had been, before I became acquainted with him, narrow and contracted, and I conceived it impossible for man to act with such nobleness.

Great God! I inwardly exclaimed, how extraordinary is the conduct of this youth? and how little have I deserved it? I, who have laboured with the incessant diligence of a fiend, to degrade, to disgrace, and even to murder him, have instead of merited punishment, received nothing but reiterated favours from his hand.

I was here interrupted by Dixon, who requested to know if an answer was demanded. I informed him that it was not, but desired

him to tender Ansley my most fervent thanks for his generous donation, which should ever be remembered by me with the sincerest gratitude; and after taking leave of him, and some others of my associates, sat out in the stage for W....., which I reached late in the evening.

Upon inquiry, I found that the court would sit in W..... in a few days. During this interval I became acquainted with most of the gentlemen who practised at this bar, among whom I was considerably astonished to find my old tutor, Dorsey, who had again adopted his quondam profession to prevent starvation. He told me, that after my departure from M.....h, he had wandered for some time through the country in the capacity of a pedlar, but not liking that occupation had relinquished it, and engaged himself as a private teacher to a family who resided at a small distance from W..... Not being there treated with that respect and attention to which he conceived him-

self intitled, he had deserted his employer, and fled to W....., where through the persuasion of an ancient friend, and the expectation of acquiring wealth, he had deemed it prudent once more to adopt his old profession, which he had then practised about two years. “ This bar,” continued he, “ is at present very much crowded, and the majority of those who belong to it can scarcely obtain business sufficient to support themselves with decency. It is here, as it is in all other towns in which courts of civil and criminal jurisdiction are established; the whole practice of the district is entirely monopolized by two or three gentlemen of the long robe, who are indeed men of the first talents and genius, and who for the suavity of their manners, the amiableness of their dispositions, and the extent of their legal knowledge, are generally respected, encouraged and admired.

I was not in the least disheartened at this information. My pride was inordinate; I knew not all my deficiencies, and conceived that my chance of success would be equal to that of any of my competitors.

It is, perhaps, impossible for man to attain a complete knowledge of himself. He seldom sees his own defects; his intellectual vision is darkened by the mists of prejudice; every thing that concerns him he regards with evident partiality; and though in some respects he may be convinced of his inferiority, yet in others he thinks his pre-eminence too obvious to escape notice. There are always some latent excellencies, some hidden and undiscovered virtues, which in his own conception, he alone possesses, to the exclusion of the rest of mankind. Were it not so he would be eminently miserable; a perfect consciousness of inferiority would tend to depress his spirits,

deaden his exertion, and reduce him to a state of consummate wretchedness; by comparison he may indeed arrive at a more accurate knowledge of himself. In the tranquillity of solitary speculation, he is apt to form too elevated notions of his powers; without an intercourse with a being occupied in the same pursuits he cannot discover his own deficiencies; a thousand little imperfections, which in solitary seclusion would have remained unnoticed, he is enabled by comparison to observe; yet his knowledge gained even thus is incomplete: in examining himself, he still carries with him that self partiality, which every one possesses in a greater or less degree, and which of consequence blinds him to his own defects. It is impossible to lay aside this partiality. Nature has, for a wise purpose, implanted it in the breast of every man, and until it be completely destroyed, to gain an inti-

mate knowledge of one's self will be utterly impracticable. To return:

At the regular period the court sat, I made application, and was instantly admitted.

CHAPTER XX.

I HAD not been long in W....., before I discovered that the justly acquired celebrity of those gentlemen whom Dorsey had mentioned, was no bar to my advancement, or retardation to my progress in the accumulation of wealth. They were, as he had properly described them, men of uncommon powers; but this I found to be a very inconsiderable obstacle; for, possessing one of the most essential ingredients in the constitution of a lawyer, an unbounded portion of impudence, and having by habit acquired a pretty happy flow of words, so far imposed upon the public in my first essay, as to be esteemed equal to any at the bar.

Talents are difficult to be appreciated; they are either too highly valued, or too little esteemed; their exact and precise extent cannot easily be ascertained. Perhaps no one knows the talents of another, who does not himself possess them. Genuine worth and real genius frequently pass unnoticed and wither in obscurity, while false glitter and pompous inanity gain for a time that applause and that reward to which the former are alone intitled. Nothing is more generally the subject of conversation, among all descriptions of character, than talents; every man conceives himself a competent judge of genius, but few know who really possess it; it is a subtilty, a grandeur, an expansion of mind that eludes general observation. He who possesses a copiousness of language, and a knowledge of the living world, is often esteemed and regarded as a man of unquestionable talents; while he who has real merit and genuine excellence, but whose modesty

prevents him from coming forth into the glare of public notice, is looked upon as a man of mere ordinary powers.

As to myself I must candidly acknowledge I had no pretensions to genius; it was never my wish to be distinguished as such; my grand object was, as I have before observed, the acquisition of riches. I conceived it to be the *summum bonum* of earthly happiness, and the only object worthy the pursuit of a rational creature. He who possesses wealth, possesses every thing desirable in life, his power to gratify the propensities of his nature is unlimited, he may be either eminently serviceable, or utterly useless, he may either rear the fragrant germ of virtue, or cultivate the nauseous weeds of pestiferous vice; if he does either he is respected; the possession of wealth gives him a dignity which nothing can destroy, in the estimation of the indiscriminating multitude; it conceals his vices, magnifies his virtues, and

bestows an inconceivable grace and brilliancy on every thing he says and every thing he does. Although I acknowledge my want of genius, I cannot acknowledge my deficiencies in any other respect; my legal information was accurate and extensive; I had read long and had read much; I had studied law not as a series of precedents, but as a comprehensive system of practical justice; my memory was stored with maxims, principles, and definitions. I had studied law intensely and had studied but little else; no wonder then I should be a profound lawyer, no wonder then I should be able to cope with the most celebrated of those with whom I practised. I was not indeed eloquent; I could speak, but could not speak with fluency or with energy. To the study of eloquence I had paid but little attention; it required an extent of information and a vigour of fancy I did not possess. I laboured only to acquire an affluence of language sufficient to enable me to express my

ideas with tolerable facility, and this was soon attained. He who is in the habit of speaking often and speaking much, will not long be troubled with hesitation or difficulty of utterance; custom renders the greatest obstacle surmountable; no barrier can oppose the attack of resistless habit, and he who at the bar is deterred at first by diffidence, or by an idea of incapacity, from rising, will in time, if he should ever have fortitude sufficient to dismiss those feelings, be as loquacious as his legal associates.

I have already mentioned the success of my first effort at this bar. I was esteemed by the inhabitants of W....., as a man of superior knowledge and eloquence; this was the first impression, it would no doubt be eradicated when I became more generally known, and I of consequence, experience a declension of business. This evil however, I conceived I might obviate by care and diligence; to this end therefore, I continued to dedicate my time

almost entirely to the discharge of my professional avocations, and began again to entertain the hope, from great and unexpected increase of business, that I should retrieve my lost fortune, and become at last rich and opulent.

I had now leisure to look around me; my prospects seemed to brighten before me, and my mind animated with fresh hope, appeared to sink into the soft composure of tranquillity; yet still at moments a suspicion would steal across it. Since my arrival in W....., I had not been troubled by my quondam terrific visitant. I conceived he had either abandoned his murderous design, or found it impossible to discover my place of residence. The imagination however, that he might find out my abode and unexpectedly attack me, sometimes disturbed my mind, and the recollection of the horrid oath which he had uttered the night previous to my departure from Baltimore, constantly haunted my fancy. To drown these

reflections I would fly to society, or have recourse to study, as sources of gratification and improvement, and as calculated to produce the effect I desired.

Late one evening, about six months after my arrival in W....., as I was entering my chamber, in the tavern in which I boarded, I heard my name audibly pronounced, by a voice I thought familiar to me. Anxious to know who it was, I drew near the partition which separated us, and listening with attention, distinctly heard the following particulars from the mouth of Ansley, who was giving an account of his life to a person in the room with him, whom I soon recognised to be Rattle; after relating what has already been mentioned in the commencement of these memoirs, he thus proceeded:

“ As Matilda and I were one afternoon returning from a neighbour’s house, where we had gone to see a poor invalid, in the last lin-

gering stage of existence, I was called aside by the father of one of my pupils, who wished me to transact some business for him; while I was thus occupied, Matilda, thinking I would soon follow, had gone on and left me at a considerable distance behind. I hastened to overtake her, the moment I was disengaged. I had not proceeded far, before her screams arrested my attention. I darted forward, with the rapidity of thought, and as I entered the road, beheld Morcell rudely seize her by the waist, and attempt to take other liberties with her, in despite of resistance, that were not perfectly consistent with humanity and decorum. In a moment I felled the villain to the earth, and after discomfiting his knight, who had rushed to his assistance, I took her by the arm and hastened home.

“On the following day, contrary to my expectations, he visited Matilda during my absence, and unhappily succeeded so well as to obtain

her pardon, for the impropriety of his conduct and insinuate himself into her favour. Not supposing but his designs were honorable, I heedlessly permitted his visits, which eventually terminated in the ruin of my unfortunate sister.

“I will not trouble you, my dear friend, with a description of the pangs I suffered, or the agony I endured, when I discovered her disgraceful condition; suffice it to say, I hastened to the house of her seducer and demanded immediate satisfaction; the villain refused. I instantly drew forth a brace of pistols, which in the paroxysm of anger I had brought with me, and presenting him with one, while I held the other to his breast, commanded him to defend himself. The coward sunk on his knees before me and besought my mercy. I was about to spurn him from me, when his tutor entered the apartment and inspired him with a glow of courage; he seized the pistol with violence, which I still held at his breast; it casually went off, and he

fell; supposing I had put an end to his life and dreading the punishment that would probably follow my detection, I removed with Matilda to the hovel of a poor black woman, who had lived for some time in the capacity of a servant with my mother, previously to her decease. In this miserable habitation, I resided for three months, at the expiration of which, my sister was delivered of a son, the exact counterpart of his detestable father. Her indisposition and my poverty at last urged me to abandon my humble asylum, and as Morcell had now completely recovered of the wound which I had given him, I conceived I might venture abroad without fear of molestation. I therefore repaired to M....., with a view to procure employment, which might enable me to purchase necessities for my sister; but to do this I found myself obliged to have recourse to manual labour, for by no other means could I so immediately supply her wants and my

own. As I was considerably skilled in portrait painting, which had once been my favourite amusement, I succeeded for the first week beyond my expectation; but fortune did not long favour my efforts, for being seized with a bilious fever the second week after my removal to M....., I was consequently obliged to relinquish my newly adopted employment.

“Upon my recovery I determined to hasten immediately to my sister, to assure her of my safety and to relieve her wants with the trifling sum I had still remaining, after the payment of such debts as I had contracted during my illness.

“As I was within sight of the miserable hovel in which she dwelt, I saw the old woman with whom I had left her, with a child in her arms, which I knew to be Matilda’s, soliciting Morcell for charity, but the inhuman wretch spurned her from him, and when she again renewed her request, deliberately struck her to

the earth. You may imagine what my feelings were at that moment; it is impossible for me to describe them; almost furious with rage, I darted forward, seized the monster by the throat, but could not strike him; the pusillanimity of his conduct enervated my arm, and I cast the despicable poltron from me with contempt; then raising the old woman from the ground, where she still lay unable to arise, I took the innocent babe in my arms and hurried to the cottage.

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CHAPTER XXI.

“ I FOUND poor Matilda dangerously ill; she had not tasted food, she informed me, for the space of two days, and borne down with the accumulated pressure of grief, hunger and disease, was fast hastening to the silent mansions of the dead. My sorrow was unbounded; I wept like an infant; I had not the fortitude to restrain my tears, and they flowed in torrents; I cursed the infernal villain who had reduced her to this state of wretchedness, and really wished at that moment, that the wound I had given him had been the cause of his death.

When I became somewhat less agitated, I went in quest of a physician, whom I despatched with all imaginable haste to Matilda.

“ As I was returning, I casually passed by the habitation of an old man, whose name was Edwards, and hearing the cries of a person apparently in distress, I instantly rushed in, and beheld Morcell in the act of striking Edwards with a cowhide. I arrested his arm and gave the villain a blow over the head with a cane I had in my hand, which instantaneously deprived him of sensation. At that moment some of his domestics entered, and while they were occupied in raising him from the floor, I left the hut, and hastened to Matilda. I met the doctor at the threshold of the door, his gloomy countenance seemed to forbode some disaster. I instantly inquired if my sister still lived; he answered me in the affirmative, but said, her dissolution was rapidly approaching; she will not, continued he, live more than a day at most. I heard no more, but flew to Matilda. She was perfectly collected, and spoke with

the utmost composure of her approaching end, of which the doctor had apprised her. She seemed as if desirous to quit this scene of trouble, and join her beloved mother, in the regions of the blessed. She requested me to avoid as much as possible, all useless lamentations on her account, and to relinquish every idea of revenging her wrongs. To my care, she said, she intrusted her hapless babe, and enjoined me never to let it behold its father. I promised to obey her, and she seemed more composed.

“On the following day, she sunk into a state of insensibility in which she continued without intermission until the moment of her death.”

Ansley here paused and seemed to be deeply affected. “Excuse this weakness,” continued he, after a few moment’s silence, “the recollection of that scene unmans me.”

Again he paused, and unable to restrain his grief, shed tears of deep-felt sorrow to the memory of his sister.

“Dash me my dear fellow,” cried Rattle, “but you will make a woman of me also, if you continue to weep in this manner; for, by all that’s physical, I feel as weighty about the heart, as if I were under the pressure of a mill-stone.” Ansley became somewhat more settled and went on.

“After the death of my sister, I despatched old Margurette with my adopted child, whom Matilda had named Edward, after me, to a friend of mine, who lived a few miles from M....., while I remained behind to perform the last funeral rites of my beloved sister. After her interment, I removed to the house of the person already mentioned, where I resided for several months.

“Little Edward could now walk, and lisp the name of his nurse; my affection for him

daily increased, and I seemed to feel no pleasure but in his society. The little cherub appeared to smile in my face, with the benignity of an angel, whenever the tear of painful recollection glistened in my eye; poor boy, with what rapture have I gazed on thee, when I retraced in thy infant countenance, the sweet features of thy amiable but unfortunate mother. With what enthusiasm, with what ecstasy, have I contemplated thy infantine struggles, to afford me delight, and remove the forbidding austerity that too often clouded my countenance. But human happiness is unsubstantial, and man is doomed to be miserable. Death, remorseless death, soon deprived me of the last and only source of pleasure heaven had left me to enjoy: but I will not anticipate events.

“ One day as I was leisurely returning from M....., I discovered an assembly of people, collected round a little cabin, which was occupied by a poor widow, whose only bed had

been dragged from beneath her to satisfy the debt of some individual; struck with astonishment at this act of brutality, I rushed through the crowd and the first person I saw was the detestable Morcell, at whose instance I afterwards learnt the poor woman's bed was sold. After discharging the debt for which it was exposed to sale and for which I claim no merit, because the gratification of my feelings was a sufficient compensation, I returned home completely disgusted, I must confess, with the savage inhumanity of civilized man."

CHAPTER XXII.

“THE next day I set out on foot for Baltimore, in order to enter on the office of principal of an academy in that town, to which I had been appointed by its trustees, at the recommendation of my friend.

“And if I mistake not,” said Rattle, interrupting him, “it was on your way thither you had the boldness to nab the horse of my sister, as he was about to give her the go-by and fly off with her at a tangent.”

“Yes,” replied Ansley, “it was there I was so fortunate as to do her the trifling service you mention.” “And for which,” cried Rattle, with vehemence, “by all that’s physical you

deserve to be immortalized. Dash me my dear fellow but I revere your character; by the immortals I glory in calling you my friend, and that Hymen may soon brandish his torch, and light you and Maria to the altar, is the most anxious desire of Jack Rattle."

"My dear friend," said Ansley, "you do me too much honour, I am not worthy of your sister; I have not the presumption to aspire to her hand. My poverty precludes the possibility of such a wish.

"D—n your poverty," vociferated Rattle, "by the immortal gods you *shall* be united to Maria. I would, by all that's physical, darken in a twinkling, the peepers of him who should dare to say you were not worthy of her, so none of your cavilling; take her at once, and be happy."

Ansley grasped him by the hand, and shook it with fervor. He saw it was useless to say

any thing more on that subject, and resumed his narrative.

“About three months after my arrival in Baltimore, I was sent for by Fenton, in consequence of the indisposition of little Edward, whom he supposed dangerously ill. I immediately obeyed his summons, but happily found him upon my arrival in a convalescent state. In a few days he had quite recovered, and was again perfectly restored to health. During his indisposition I had formed a resolution of once more visiting the humble grave of his unfortunate mother. Upon his recovery, therefore, I set out one day from Fenton’s, and after travelling slowly for several hours, about four o’clock in the evening reached the graveyard in which she was interred. A small winding path led me to her grave; it was overspread with long grass, which moved by the breeze, gave a pleasing softness to the solemnity of the scene, while a spreading willow

waved its drooping branches over it, and seemed to weep at every motion of the passing gale.

“ The scene was peculiarly interesting; it accorded with the gloomy temper of my mind, and I experienced a kind of delectable melancholy I cannot describe. Great God! how transitory, how fleeting is human life; like the sweet bud of early spring, man blooms, perishes and is forgotten. His existence is but the breath of a moment, which the slightest accident may endanger, or the most casual calamity destroy. All his pleasures are momentary, and all his gratifications insipid. From the first dawn of life, until the last expiring gasp of nature, he pursues a delusive phantom which constantly eludes his grasp, and at last, tired of the ineffectual pursuit, he sinks into the cold grave, which terminates at once his cares, his griefs and his disappointments.

“ After dropping a tear on the humble sod which covered the mouldering body of the once beautiful Matilda, I quitted the gloomy and mournful repository of death with feelings of unspeakable sorrow. Absorbed in a melancholy reverie, I was slowly proceeding to the house in which I intended to lodge, when a deep and dreadful groan arrested my attention. I listened, it was again repeated. Supposing it to proceed from some one in distress, I immediately hastened to his relief, and found, somewhat to my surprise, that it issued from the little hut which had formerly been the habitation of myself and Matilda. I entered it precipitately, and at that moment beheld a man in the act of plunging a dagger into the breast of another who lay at his feet. I grasped his arm, and wrested the murderous weapon from his hand. Without uttering a word, he instantly fled, and left me to wonder at the singularity of his conduct. I directed my attention to the

stranger who still lay bleeding on the floor. I hastily glanced my eye over his countenance, and recognised Morcell. Sympathy was the only feeling I at that moment experienced. I felt for his situation and commiserated it. I drew my handkerchief from my pocket, with an intention to bind up his wound, which continued to bleed profusely, and while I was thus occupied, one of his servants fortunately entered. I requested him to assist me, but he did not hear me; astonishment deprived him of the faculty of attention, and he remained immovably fixed to the floor. Just then, I discovered the ruffian, who had attempted to assassinate Morcell, glide by the door of the hut. I directly rushed out, in order if possible to catch him; he ran and I pursued him, but to no effect. He outstripped me, and concealing himself in the almost inextricable mazes of the circumjacent wood, eluded my search. I now returned to the hut, with a view to assist the servant

in conveying Morcell home, but it was empty, the servant had already done what I was desirous to do, and I immediately hastened to the house of the person with whom I purposed to lodge that night. On the succeeding day I repaired to Fenton, to whom I gave a succinct account of the adventure I had met with during my absence, and departed for Baltimore."

CHAPTER XXIII.

“THREE weeks had scarcely elapsed, before the sudden death of Edward called me again to Fenton’s. I was told his nurse had heedlessly left him to amuse himself in a room, which was situated in the second story of the house where he resided, while she was absent, and raising himself, by the assistance of a chair, to a level with one of the windows, which happened unfortunately to be open, he fell to the ground and instantly expired. The death of this luckless child deeply affected me. I loved him with more than parental affection. He was the only relative I had, to my knowledge, in existence, and was consequently en-

deared to me by every tie that can unite one human being to another. You may therefore imagine what my feelings were, when I was summoned to attend his burial. They mock description; I cannot, I will not attempt to delineate them. Suffice it to say he was interred in the grave of his mother.

“ After having paid the last tribute of affection to their memory, by erecting a small stone at the head of their humble grave, I hastened again to Baltimore, where I have since constantly resided, without meeting with any occurrence worthy of relation.”

Ansley here ended his narrative, and powerfully affected, retired in silence to bed, and Rattle, as if unwilling to disturb him, immediately followed his example.

I now began to ruminate on what I had just heard. Ansley had, through motives of delicacy, omitted to mention those extraordinary instances of generosity which he had so

frequently shown to me and others, and his whole narrative clearly and evidently established his innocence of any premeditated attempt to injure me, with which, it will be recollected, I had often charged him.

I was now more than ever convinced of the unsullied purity of his heart, and the disinterested liberality of his soul; although I had remorselessly seduced and degraded his unfortunate sister; although I had inhumanly driven from me the innocent babe which I had begotten, and although he had seen me commit deeds, whose enormity and whose turpitude ought to have damned me in the estimation of mankind; yet he had had the humanity, the generous sympathy, when I was in danger, nobly to afford me that relief and assistance of which he saw I stood in want. This was acting as became a man; this was doing what the immutable Disposer of human destiny enjoins us to do; this was, in my mind, the very perfection

of unsophisticated virtue. I regarded him as something more than human. I had no idea of such perfectibility. I did not suppose it in the nature of man. His whole life exhibited continued instances of the most heroic fortitude and sublime virtue. Even in the miserable abode of adversity, and almost overwhelmed in the gulf of misfortune, he rose to a height that set every calamity at defiance. He despised alike the censure and the applause of the world. He dared to act nobly, and he did so. The consciousness of having never wandered from the undeviating line of moral rectitude, afforded him a more delicious, and a more exquisite pleasure than the unceasing plaudits of an indiscriminating multitude; but he was indeed a man; yet, great God, how superior to the paltry ephemera of the day; the insect tribe which buzz for a moment, and are forgotten. He was a philanthropist on the broadest basis;

he loved mankind, and pitied their vices. His hand was ever extended to heal the wound which tyranny inflicted, and to cure the morbid disease which unrelenting adversity occasioned.

What is vain life, an idle flight of days,
A still delusive round of sickly joys,
A scene of little cares, and trifling passions,
If not ennobled by the deeds of virtue.

The narrative of Ansley still left a difficulty unremoved, to which I could give no solution. The individual who had pursued me with such unceasing malignity was still enveloped in a mystery I had not power to unravel. It was evident, from what Ansley had said, that the person from whose murderous grasp he had so timely rescued me, was as unknown to him as he was to me. Finding conjecture again ineffectual, I left the solution of this wonderful enigma to time, and betook myself to repose.

The death of poor Edward gave me but little uneasiness, as I had long anticipated the melancholy event, and I sunk imperceptibly into the arms of sleep.

CHAPTER XXIV.

I STILL continued to scamper down the broad road of perdition, regardless of consequences, and unmindful of the noble example which Ansley had presented for my imitation. Vice was too deeply rooted in my nature to be eradicated with ease, and I yielded without effort to its turbulent dictates. I saw the beauty and loved the fascinating charms of virtue, but had not power to abandon the course of iniquity which I had so long pursued, and to which, from the earliest dawn of reason, I had been accustomed. We may attempt to change or erase the indelible impressions of youth; we may endeavour to destroy the pernicious in-

fluence of habit, but will ultimately find our efforts ineffectual, and our firmest resolutions yield to the resistless force of early education. Man is naturally prone to evil, which when confirmed and strengthened by precept and example, it will be next to moral impossibility to reach the temple of virtue. Even to those who have tenaciously adhered to the line of rectitude, the aspect of vice is at times lovely, and, if they are not possessed of a more than common share of fortitude, will lead them by imperceptible gradations into the most horrible abyss of iniquity; but I had been taught from the moment I was capable of discrimination, to regard vice with indifference, and even to pursue it, if I found that it contributed in the smallest degree to my welfare or prosperity. The most pernicious principles, the most destructive and dangerous doctrines had been infused into my youthful mind, and those principles and doctrines confirmed by

example. How then could I avoid being vitious; but I offer this not as an extenuation of my conduct, (for I know it to be incapable of palliation) but merely to convince the world that the enormities of which I have been guilty have originated almost entirely from education. I will now resume the thread of my narrative.

As I was one day strolling down a street in W....., I was accosted by a boy, who informed me that a person who then lay in the poor-house of that city wished particularly to see me. A curiosity to know who this person was and what he desired of me, induced me to comply with his wish. I entered the abode of poverty and wretchedness, I must confess, with some degree of reluctance. I however followed my conductor, who led me into a room, where I beheld extended on a miserable mat of straw, the mere shadow of a man, apparently in the last agonies of death. I approached him with a degree of horror, to which I had

hitherto been a stranger; he groaned with the utmost anguish, and after an awful pause, during which he seemed endeavouring to collect his ideas, requested me to sit down by him. I complied with his request. "Morcell," said he, with a tone of inexpressible horror, "I was once your most deadly enemy. I have, (be not astonished) I have repeatedly attempted to murder you. I have pursued you with the fury of a fiend, wherever you have gone. It was I you beheld the evening on which Matilda expired; it was I you beheld lurking under your window in M.....; it was I you beheld in B....., the night on which Rattle was wounded. But pardon me, I entreat you. I feel that I shall no longer disturb you; my dissolution is rapidly approaching; my lamp of life is nearly extinguished; but ere I appear before that awful tribunal, at which a collected universe must receive the sentence of eternal life or death, I will make a confession, which

will perhaps excite your astonishment and fully explain the mystery in which I have appeared to be involved.

“ My name is Edwards: I am the son of him you so inhumanly abused; fortunately for you I was absent at the time it was done. Upon my return I found my sister dead; her death had been accelerated by your unfeeling treatment of my father; my brain was maddened with rage. I called the eternal creator of the universe to witness, that I would cease not to persecute you, until the fountain of vitality ceased to flow; I swore by the immaculate and ever-living God, that nothing but your blood should appease my vengeance; but I have been disappointed; all my attempts have been frustrated, and I now die without having gratified that revenge I had so solemnly and religiously sworn to take. I die, however, comparatively happy, in having never been able to accomplish my foul design, and I yield up my soul to its

creator, with the consolation, that as yet it has not been stained by the commission of murder.”

Here he paused for a few moments and then proceeded.

“ I will not trouble you with a history of my life; a succinct narration of the circumstances, connected with many of the events which have marked your career since your entrance into the world, will be sufficient. I do this to remove the inquietude under which you labour, and the uneasiness you experience, as to the mystery of my conduct. It is the only expiation I can make for the anxiety I have occasioned you, and it is one which I make with pleasure.

“ A few days after the interment of my sister, I began to reflect on the means of gratifying my revenge. Your character was not unknown to me. I knew the timidity of your nature and the credulity of your mind. I deter-

mined to take advantage of them, and assuming a garb calculated to produce the accomplishment of my design, I repaired at the dead of night to your house; fortunately the door stood open, and I gained admittance without difficulty. It was my expectation to terrify you, if awake, by my appearance to such a degree, as to render you perfectly defenceless. I found you asleep, and was preparing to plunge a dagger into your breast, when you suddenly awoke from your slumber, by a noise which I accidentally made in your chamber, in my too great anxiety to execute my purpose. I drew back and stood at the head of your bed; my appearance had not the desired effect; for although it occasioned a transitory deprivation of reason, yet the violent and frantic motions you made while in this state, precluded every possibility of an attempt on your life with security; and fearing lest I should be discovered (for I heard a noise below which considerably

alarmed me,) I left the house precipitately and proceeded to my dwelling.

“ This disappointment irritated me much. I experienced an inquietude I cannot express, arising from the unsuccessful effort I had made to accomplish my end. My desire to rid you of life was unbounded; my enmity to you was deep and indelible; I never heard your name mentioned but I felt the agonies of hell. My antipathy extended to the remotest branch of your family; I regarded every thing that concerned you with a degree of hatred not to be described; the very sound of your voice was horrible to my ear. I never approached your dwelling, that I did not experience a sensation truly agonizing. I felt that I should be perfectly happy, if I could annihilate your whole family. I felt too that my enmity was right and that my desire to inflict punishment on your detested race, was consistent with every principle of justice. I was not of that tame and submis-

sive disposition to bear the insults of arrogance with impunity. I never forgave the man who injured me. I brooded over the slightest fault, until I had magnified it into a serious offence, and never ceased until I had obtained the full and ample satisfaction I conceived it demanded. Such has been the prominent characteristic of my mind; one that the world may regard with horror and detestation; but one which, were I again to begin existence, I would not willingly exchange for that meek and passive humbleness which distinguishes the nature of him who tamely cringes to his fellow man, while he tortures him to death, or goads him to madness, by the agonizing lash of remorseless despotism. From me then, it is not to be supposed you (after the injury I had suffered) would escape with impunity. The death of my sister, and the barbarous and inhuman treatment of my poor father, preyed incessantly upon my mind, and

the means by which I should redress my wrongs and gratify my just revenge, occupied my attention, by night and by day, every thought and every consideration was completely absorbed in the resistless passion which swayed my mind with uncontrolled dominion. Your death was my grand and principal object, and to that I sacrificed every pursuit and occupation that could further my interest, or promote my welfare.”

CHAPTER XXV.

“ON the day succeeding my visit to your chamber, my aged parent was arrested and confined in prison at M....., on suspicion of having murdered a person, who had been found dead the evening before near his house, at the instance of your father. This act of deliberate cruelty, augmented if possible, the deadly antipathy I already bore you. I again inwardly cursed you and your family, and felt a proud exultation in the idea of ultimately having it in my power finally to exterminate both.

I accompanied my father to prison, and exerted every effort to alleviate the poignancy of

his grief, and to render his present situation as comfortable as possible. Six weeks after his confinement, I went out one evening for the purpose of exercise and recreation, and continued absent longer than I expected. Upon my return, I was alarmed by the cry of fire and hurrying forward, beheld the prison in flames. Occupied with the safety of my father only, I rushed on with a rapidity that seemed to mock control. As I approached the jail, I beheld you standing at a distance, an unconcerned spectator. I passed you, and hurried to my father's assistance; but it was too late, his fate you witnessed; it is therefore unnecessary to relate it. As I returned, I again saw you standing in the same place in which I had before observed you; I determined to discover your residence, by following you home, and execute my design, which had been delayed by the imprisonment of my father. I watched you until I observed you enter the house in

which you boarded; then hurrying forward, I determined to remain concealed in the garden, until you had retired to bed. I had not been there many minutes, before I discovered you looking out at the window; led astray by the force of my feelings, I uttered an involuntary exclamation, which I found you overheard, by your immediately closing the window; concluding that I had excited your suspicion, by the singularity of my conduct, and that you would in consequence of it remain on the alert until morning, I returned home, with a determination not again to attempt the execution of my design, until your suspicions were completely removed.

“ For three weeks therefore, I remained in a remote quarter of the town; but, with the greatest anxiety imaginable to gratify my vengeance; apprised of your want of personal courage, I knew it would be useless to challenge you to the field and thus obtain redress for the

injuries I had sustained, by the brutality of your disposition; a more honourable mode it certainly would not have been, as your life would beyond a doubt have been the forfeit if you had accepted the challenge, for I was an accomplished marksman. However the world might have construed it, I would still have believed that I was a murderer; to avoid therefore the uncertainty of your meeting me, I thought proper to resort to the mode which I adopted, and clandestinely put an end to your life.

“Supposing that your fears were by this time sufficiently allayed, I once more sallied forth from my lurking place in quest of you, but found considerably to my disappointment, that you had removed to B.....; sickness prevented me from following you thither. The ague with which I was seized, on the day I proposed setting out, compelled me to keep my bed for several months, greatly to my mor-

tification and disappointment; upon my recovery, having some business to transact in the neighbourhood in which your family lived, I hastened there to complete it as soon as possible, that I might repair to Baltimore, in pursuit of you. Upon my arrival, I found that your father was dead and you, much to my satisfaction, there and in the possession of his fortune. I concluded this to be a happy moment to execute my long protracted design and cut you off in your golden dreams of future happiness and imaginary grandeur.

I chanced one evening, as I was taking a ramble, to pass by the cottage which had formerly been occupied by Ansley, where I beheld you sitting, apparently absorpt in meditation; rejoiced at the occurrence of so favourable an opportunity, I entered and gently approaching you, hastily stabbed you with a dagger which I always bore about me. I was in the act of repeating the blow, when Ansley

seized my arm and compelled me to fly; in a few moments I again returned, with a view to ascertain whether the blow had been fatal or not, but was pursued by Ansley, from whom I escaped by concealing myself in the surrounding woods, and repaired to my habitation, when darkness approached. You must forgive me, when I declare, that I never felt a greater degree of exultation than I felt at the idea of having at length finally terminated your life. I will not attempt to apologize for this brutality, this savage ferocity. To you it would be useless. From the great Regulator of our destinies I have sought pardon, and from him I trust, I shall obtain it. Almighty God!—”

He could say no more, a violent spasm shook his frame almost to dissolution, and he sunk lifeless on his pillow; in a few moments he again recovered and with difficulty thus proceeded:

“ I find that I have not long to live; I will be brief.

“ Understanding that the wound I gave you had not been mortal, I repaired to M....., where I was once more confined to the bed of sickness, on which I continued for several months. When I again recovered, I learned that you had returned to Baltimore; thither I followed you, when returning strength enabled me to undertake the journey. Still resolving not to violate my oath, I made secret inquiries immediately upon my arrival in Baltimore, concerning your place of residence, which I soon discovered, and found to my gratification, that the apartment in which you lodged was separated from the house which was occupied by the family with whom you boarded. In what manner I appeared to you on that night you well know. I assumed that appearance for the same reason I had before taken it; to render you defenceless, by acting on your credulity and superstition. But I was again to be disappointed; less timid than formerly, you rushed

upon me and compelled me to retreat, but not without having first made an attempt to stab you.

“A few nights after this adventure, I repaired to your house with my former design, and passing up and down the pavement, waited with a great degree of impatience for your arrival, but to no effect; you did not return that night.”

I here interrupted him, and informed him of the circumstance which had prevented me from lodging at home that evening.

“Providence, sir,” continued he, “seems to have protected and guarded you from the fatal blow which I contemplated giving you; for in every attempt at your life, I have been unsuccessful; but, notwithstanding the repeated disappointments I met with in the execution of my design, I could not relinquish the idea of depriving you of an existence which was to me so hateful.

“In a short time I learned that you had gone to W....., which you intended to make your place of permanent residence. Here therefore, I followed you, but to my misfortune was attacked, shortly after my arrival, with the rheumatism. With this disorder I was confined to my bed for several months, without any prospect of recovery; and in addition to this calamity my money ran out, and I was sent to the miserable habitation in which you now see me, at once an object of pity, contempt and detestation.”

Edwards here stopped, and in a few moments expired in an agony of body and mind that exceeds description. I returned to my lodgings, with a degree of horror and consternation I had never before experienced. The dreadful termination of Edwards's life brought me to a sense of my own condition, and displayed, in genuine colours, the iniquitous course of infamy, injustice and villany which

I had pursued. I determined to put an end to it, by retiring from the world, and closing my days in merited obscurity.

To this determination I have adhered, and have at last taken up my residence in a remote and distant part of Maryland, endeavouring by charity and benevolence to expiate, in some degree, the crimes of which I have been guilty.

Before I conclude I will endeavour to gratify the reader's curiosity, with respect to the principal persons that have been introduced in the course of these memoirs.

My unfortunate sister, after removing to Philadelphia, died in a brothel, of a disorder to which women in that line of life are subject. Dixon, the pompous, the magnificent Dixon, has also paid the debt of nature, and is now the food of worms. Dorsey, my quondam tutor and colleague in iniquity has removed to Baltimore, where he continues to practise the

law, and to glide down the current of life, hated, contemned and despised.

Ansley, after marrying Maria, removed to Scotland, where I understand they enjoy that peace, happiness and tranquillity which never fail to flow from a virtuous and well regulated life; and Rattle, the wild but generous Rattle, still continues to excite the wonder and admiration of the gaping rabble when he dashes through the streets of Philadelphia in his flaming curricule, or darkens the peepers of the watchmen in his nocturnal rambles.

I have thus brought my narrative to a conclusion. If any should ask the motive which induced me to put my character in so unfavourable a point of view, I briefly answer that I conceived it to be an act of justice I owed to the world, and a sort of expiation of the offences I have committed in my journey through life. My example will, I trust, have a beneficial tendency. It will teach parents for

the future, to avoid encouraging their infant offspring in those courses of iniquity in which I was brought up, and to which I was constantly habituated. Man is the creature of education; his mind, in a state of infancy is susceptible of any impression. It ought therefore, to be the peculiar care of those to whose protection nature has intrusted him, to impress upon his youthful mind a strong sense of truth, of justice and of humanity; and when death has put a final close to his existence, he will sink into the silent mansions of the dead, pitied, lamented and honoured.

FINIS.



